SEPTEMBER

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Polyhedron

NEWSZINE

297$100

RPGA™ NETWORK

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Conventions

CONTACT 7,
September 29th-October 1st
Come to the Ramada Inn. Hwy. 41 North in Evansville, IN. Guest of Honor is Andrew J. Offutt. Other guests include George "Lan" Laskowski, Rick Dunning, and Arlan Andrews as Toastmaster. Events include Network sanctioned gaming, closed-circut television programs, art show, dealers' room, 24-hour hospitality suite, and a masquerade. Membership is $15 until September 1st, $20 thereafter. For more information write: Contact 7, P.O. Box 3894, Evansville, IN 47737-3894, or call 812-853-5730.

COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS 15,
October 6-8
The Schenectady Wargamers Association will host this convention at the Ramada Inn in Schenectady, NY. It offers Network events, including a Masters tournament. There also will be several AD&D® game tournaments and single-round events. Also featured are Battletech miniatures battles, a Star Fleet Battles tournament, Civilization, Car Wars, Diplomacy (Youngstown 10-player variant), Champions, Runequest, and many more FRP, boardgame, and miniatures events. Also offered are a miniatures painting contest and an auction. Advanced registration is $10 for the weekend; registration at the door is $15. To receive pre-registration information send your address and a stamp to: Eric Paperman, Con Director, 418 Vliet Blvd, Cohoes, NY 12047. For lodging information contact the Schenectady Ramada Inn 518-370-7151.

DRAGON CON '89, October 6-8
This event will be held at the OMNI International Hotel and Convention Center in Atlanta, Georgia. Guests include: Anne McCaffrey, Wes Craven, Michael Whelan, Andrew Greenberg, Margaret Weis, Tracy Hickman, Gary Gygax, Richard Garriott, Robert Asprin, Lynn Abbey, and Larry Elmore. Pre-registration (through September 15th) is $30.00. Fantasy role-playing, strategic, miniatures, and computer gaming is offered in more than 100 featured tournaments including RPGA™ Network Open and Masters events. Network tournaments include the AD&D game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, and GAMMA WORLD® game. Four tracks of panels and workshops are planned, along with a masquerade, art show and print shop, video rooms, art and consignment auctions, con suite, and more! For information on attending or judging, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: DRAGON CON '89, Box 47696, Atlanta, GA 30362.

OCTOBERFEST GAMING,
October 21-23
Detroit's yearly Halloween game convention will be sponsored by the Detroit Gaming Center and the City of Detroit Recreation Department. The location is the Lighthouse Recreation Center in Detroit. Meet Erick Wujcik, designer of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Revised RECON, and Ninjas & Superspies role-playing games. Events include a variety of role-playing games, seminars, and a role-playing costume contest. There will be no dealers. Admission is free. For more information write: Erick Wujcik, P.O. Box 1623, Detroit, MI 48231, or call 313-833-3016.

Classifieds

Michigan 15-year-old male gamer seeks pen pal. Interested in the STAR FRONTIERS® game, GAMMA WORLD® game, D&D® game, Traveller, and Traveller 2300. I'm willing to learn others. Contact: Peter Ingraham, 5944 S. Hogenson Rd, Scottville, MI 49454.

Minnesota Creative 14-year-old male looking for players and GMs. I play the AD&D® game, GAMMARAUDERS™ game, MARVEL SUPER HEROES™ game, Nehwon, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, James Bond, and Twilight 2000. I am looking for more. I have had almost five years experience with the D&D game, four years with the AD&D game. Contact: Mike Scholl, 12135 50th Avenue North, Plymouth, MN 55442, or call 612-559-3258.

North Carolina Wanted: RPGA Network members to form official Network club. Contact: Dave Hill, P.O. Box 21003, Greensboro, NC 27420.

Ohio Wanted: Someone who lives in the Wellington or Oberlin area to start a club for the AD&D game or D&D game. Write Jake Millspaw, 18123 Quarry Rd., Wellington, OH 44090.

Virginia Lost in the wilderness. Two adventurers are looking for a DM and players. We play the D&D game, AD&D game, GANGBUSTERS® game, STAR FRONTIERS game, GAMMA WORLD game, and DAWN PATROL® game. Contact Claire and Bill Brierton, 4001 C Spring Pond Pl., Apt. 202, Fairfax, VA 22033.

General Gamers, we want you! Join Dragonslayers Unlimited, a nationwide, RPGA Network club of role players and play-by-mail gamers! The club publishes its own newszine and runs contests and member-sponsored PBMs. Dues are $14 a year. However, to preview the club through its newszine without obligation, send $2 to: Jeff Young, 88 Mallard Run, Maumee, OH 43537.

General I'm looking for used RPGs at low prices. If you've got GAMMA WORLD game, Star Wars, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, TOP SECRET/S.I.™ game, or the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Campaign Setting, contact: Ian Eller, RD #2, Box 161-B, Upper Blade, Eddy, PA 18972.

General DRAGON® Magazines—massive collection of mint condition back issues from #1 to current, and large collection of role-playing items. Send self-addressed-stamped-envelope to receive price list. Write to: Tim Stabosz, 45 Country Manor Lane, Orland Park, IL 60462, or call 312-361-2999. ❑

About the Cover

A halfling caretaker deals with an unwelcome visitor outside of The For-Rest Inn, a Living City establishment. Art by Keith Parkinson.

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Notes From HQ

The Gates of Ravens Bluff

The RPGA™ Network's first major product: *Gateway To Ravens Bluff, The Living City,* premiered at the GEN CON® Game Fair this year. It has 64 pages filled with city officials, personalities, businesses and their proprietors, information about the city and its government, encounter charts, two adventures, and submission guidelines.

The product also features a big, beautiful, full-color map of the city. Best of all, everything in *Gateway To Ravens Bluff* was written and drawn by Network members.

Gateway To Ravens Bluff will not be available in gaming stores. You can purchase it at the RPGA Network booth at conventions such as the GEN CON Game Fair. It also is available through the Mail Order Hobby Shop or Network HQ, and you can use the form on the back of the mailer cover to send for it. The cost is about $10 to non-members and about $8 to members (you have to show your membership card at the convention or provide your membership number when ordering to get the discount price). This is a limited edition product.

The Network staff already has begun work on a second Living City product. Let us know soon what you thought of our first effort.

Numerous Newszines

Also featured on the back mailer cover is our introductory POLYHEDRON™ Newszine. This 32-page issue is being mailed in new members' kits. We also are making it available by mail or at conventions to all members. The issue has an AD&D® Game adventure, two Living City features, The New Rogues Gallery, and game advice columns. This, too, is a limited edition, as most of the copies are being reserved for new members' kits.

As an added bonus, we are offering back issues of the Newszine at a discount price. HQ has an abundance of certain issues, which we would like to clear out to make room for other things. So, for a limited time, we are giving you the opportunity to pick up some of these issues at bargain prices.

Renewal Notices

Several Network members have been calling HQ concerned because they have received a renewal notice after they already paid their renewal fees.

This is happening because HQ has begun sending out more than one renewal notice in an effort to get more members to renew.

We send out an initial renewal notice about six weeks before a group of memberships is set to expire. We send out a second notice three to four weeks later directed at the members who have not yet sent back their renewal fees. However, some members send their renewal fees back at the same time we're sending our second mailing. The letters cross in the mail, and the member gets a second renewal notice shortly after he sent in his money and renewal form. Whew! that was a lengthy way to say if you get a second renewal notice after you just renewed, don't worry about it.

The Slush Pile

The Network gets quite a few submissions for tournaments and the Newszine shortly before GEN CON Game Fair. We appreciate the submissions, and we need more. But because the HQ staff is so involved with the Game Fair and all the events and activites we sponsor there, we aren't able to get to those submissions as readily as we would like. So, we apologize for not replying to submissions faster, and as soon as the Game Fair is past, we will devote our energies to responding to authors.

Tournament Deadline

The deadline for tournament submissions for GEN CON Game Fair, 1990, is January 5th. If you want to have one of your tournaments considered, mark the deadline on your calendar. The date seems far in advance of the August, 1990 convention. However, it takes lots of time and work to read submissions, and to select, develop, and schedule them. For example, at this Game Fair we scheduled 38 tournaments and more than a dozen seminars and activities. Tournament writing guidelines are available by writing to HQ.

Happy Anniversary

Next issue marks a milestone for the Newszine. It is our 50th issue, and we are celebrating by increasing this issue to 40 pages and adding a full color cover. Skip and I already have selected the articles for the issue, such as a couple of Living City features that will add a new dimension of fun and mystery to your city campaigns.

Playing Fair

The Network cannot send out brand new tournaments to every convention in the world. We only have a few dozen new tournaments to work with each year—that number depends on the number of tournament submissions we receive from members. That means if we use a tournament in the Midwest, we are likely to use it in the North, South, East, and West. HQ has noticed that some Network members who are able to attend conventions across the country are repeatedly playing in the same tournaments. Maybe those members don't know that HQ has a record of what tournaments each member has played in. You don't get credit for taking first place twice in the same tournament; you only are awarded points for the first time you play in it.

Maybe those members go to a convention only to discover the featured tournament is one they played in on the opposite coast; and they play again for something to do. There is a remedy: call HQ. We keep a file on every convention with Network events. We'll tell you what tournaments are scheduled for what conventions. That way you won't be faced with reruns.

Thanks

The HQ staff and I extend our thanks to all the volunteers who helped the Network before and during the Game Fair. We'll report on the game fair in our next issue.

Take Care,

Jean ❑

Letters

Non-Members Have Members' Privileges

I am a new member to the RPGA™ Network, and in the first issue of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine that I received you expressed your dismay about the lack of ambition among members in regards to recruiting new members. First, let me say that not all members are being lazy; I myself do not know anyone who would want to be a member. The people I play the AD&D® game with either are members or are only occasional players who do not invest much time and money into the game. In fact, I joined the RPGA Network in hopes of finding players who are more devoted to the game than some I know. So, there are some people with legitimate excuses. Nevertheless, I was surprised that only 33 members were involved in the drive. However, I think there might be a couple of reasons for the lack of involvement. You mentioned that some members said they did not participate in the drive because they thought they had no chance of winning. This is a common excuse, but I think that your statement about participating for the benefit of the Network and the hobby instead of just "winning" helps to remove this excuse. As you said in "Notes From HQ," all efforts that help the Network and the hobby ultimately help the members themselves.

I think another reason for the lack of involvement stems from the current non-members. For example, if one player in a campaign is an RPGA Network member and the other players are not, it is in the economic interest of those non-members to remain non-members. While the member is the only one who pays the membership fee, all of his or her friends can enjoy the same benefits. They can read his or her POLYHEDRON Newszine and order products through him or her and get the member's 10% discount through TSR's Mail Order Hobby Shop. As long as the member allows the non-members to benefit from the Network for free, they will see no reason to join.

Of course, the question is "how do you remedy this problem?" You might say that the member should not allow the non-members to read his or her POLYHEDRON Newszine or enjoy the 10% discount, but that is up to the member, and the situation may involve friendships that make the problem more complex. This sort of "cheating" always will occur, and the only remedies that come to mind are to promote the benefits that only individual members can enjoy, such as Network ranking, and to promote the benefits that the Network and the hobby receive from increased membership—benefits that will trickle down to the members themselves.

In closing, let me say that the Network advertisements in DRAGON® Magazine and DUNGEON® Adventures have been excellent; they made me aware of the Network and caused my initial interest. HQ is certainly doing its part, and I think that more members will start doing their part by recruiting others.

Alan J. Block
Beloit, WI

Alan, you may be right about recruitment problems and non-members benefiting from membership materials and services. We share your optimism that members will increase their efforts to get others to join.

We will continue to urge members to get their friends to join. It is essential that the Network grows and becomes more of a force in the hobby industry. The more members we have, the more funds the Network has to work with and the more products and services it can provide. We know you've all heard us make that speech before. But we really mean it.

We'd like to hear from other members about this topic. Do you have ideas to recruit more members? Do you want us to offer another membership drive? And if we do, would more than 33 members participate? We're a little too nervous to put up such big prizes like we did the last go around, considering the little response we had to that drive. However, we will come up with good prizes. We want to know what you think about all of this, and we'd like to print some of your feelings in this letters column. ❑

POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (the official newsletter of TSR, Inc.'s ROLE PLAYING GAME ASSOCIATION™ Network) is published bi-monthly by TSR, Inc. The mailing address for all correspondence is: P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147. Telephone: (414) 248-3625.

POLYHEDRON Newszine is mailed free to all RPGA™ members. US membership rates are $15 per year (bulk mail delivery only); foreign rates are $25 per year (surface mail) or $45 per year (air mail). All prices are subject to change without notice. Changes of address for the delivery of membership materials must be received at least 30 days prior to the effective date of the change to insure uninterrupted delivery.

POLYHEDRON Newszine welcomes unsolicited submissions of written material and artwork. No responsibility for such submissions can be assumed by the publisher in any event. No submissions will be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope of sufficient size.

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With Great Power

More International Super Heroes

by William Tracy

We continue our international tour of the Marvel Universe, this time stopping in the romantic street cafes of Paris, France, and the mysterious jungles of South America. Those places birthed heroes of note: Peregrine, the aerial guardian of France; and Defensor, the armored defender of Argentina.

DEFENSOR

Gabriel Carlos Dantes Sepulveda, construction worker, adventurer

F	A	S	E	R	I	P
GD	GD	GD	EX	TY	TY	TY
(10)	(10)	(10)	(20)	(6)	(6)	(6)
		RM				
		(30)				

Health: 50/70
Karma: 18
Resources: GD (10)
Popularity: 10 in South America, 1 elsewhere

KNOWN POWERS

Armored Exoskeleton: Defensor's suit is modeled after the armor worn by ancient conquistadors. It is made of Vibranium (Incredible strength material) and provides him with Incredible protection against Physical, Energy, and Force attacks. The armor also increases Defensor's Strength by +2 CS. The armor is open at the face and has a built in cooling system.

Shield: Also made of Vibranium, this shield is considered Incredible strength material and provides Incredible protection against Physical, Energy, and Force attacks. However, even with the armor and shield, Defensor is subject to Slam and Stun attacks. Defensor can throw the shield up to four areas away, causing Remarkable Blunt Throwing Damage.

TALENTS: Defensor has a +1 CS when using the shield. His Reason is considered Good when dealing with engineering or architecture. He knows how to drive a variety of construction and excavation machinery.

BACKGROUND: Several years ago, Gabriel discovered an entrance to a secret underground passage while he was digging the foundation for an apartment building. Gabriel's foreman told him to ignore the passage. However, plagued by curiosity, Gabriel returned that night to explore it.

He soon became lost in the labyrinth of ancient tunnels that were filled with old machinery. He discovered a suit of armor, which was connected to a bank of machines. Trying it on, he discovered it fit him well, and he was quickly forced to learn its strengths.

Gabriel was attacked by members of a subterranean race. Fleeing from the fight, he was able to find his way back to the surface. He decided to keep the armor and use its power to become a guardian of the people of South America.

PERSONALITY: Defensor believes that he is a Latin charmer. He is always trying to sweep women off their feet. His chivalrous attitude toward women, however, sometimes comes across as chauvinistic. He especially has problems when working with female heroes; he is always trying to protect them.

PEREGRINE

Alan Racine, writer

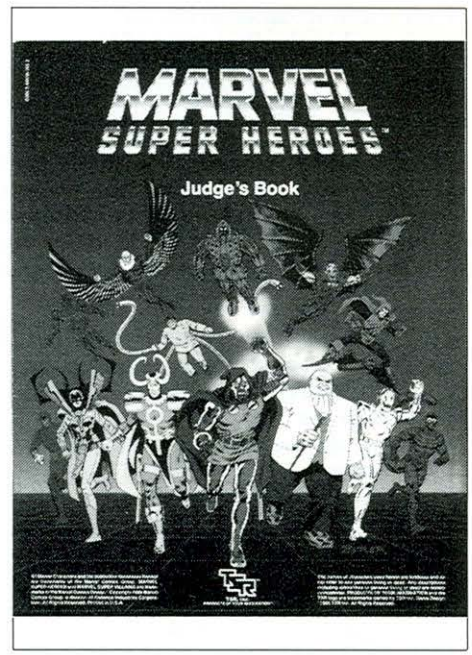
F	A	S	E	R	I	P
EX	EX	GD	EX	GD	GD	TY
(20)	(20)	(10)	(20)	(10)	(10)	(6)

Health: 70
Karma: 26
Resources: GD (10)
Popularity: 10 in France, 1 elsewhere

KNOWN POWERS

Flight: Peregrine flies using glider wings and small jet turbines augmented by an anti-gravity generator. He can fly at Good Speed (eight areas a round), and he has enough fuel for the turbines for about an hour and a half of continuous flight.

TALENTS: Peregrine is an expert in savate, a form of French kick-boxing. He is allowed a +1CS to Fighting when using this combat form. In addition, he is given a +1CS to Agility and Strength



when he uses savate while flying. Peregrine also has the Writer and Journalist talents.

BACKGROUND: Nothing is known about Peregrine's life before he appeared in Marvel's *Contest of Champions* mini-series. The origin of his flight equipment is unknown, and he has not displayed any knowledge to indicate he built the equipment.

Peregrine apparently began his hero career while living in France. Recently he has been traveling, doing freelance assignments for Silver Sable and her organization, The Wild Pack.

PERSONALITY: Early in Peregrine's career he seemed arrogant and believed that he was the best when it came to aerial combat. He also was boastfully proud of his country, displaying a patriotism matched only by few others, such as Captain America.

However, Peregrine's personality has shifted in the past few years. He has become mercenary, and he no longer cares about limiting his operations to France, moving about where Sable's assignments or an adventure takes him. He has also mellowed; his arrogance has abated a little. ❑

Cataclysm

Part Two: The Last Bastion of Bast

An AD&D® Game Adventure

Illustrated by Angela Bostick

by Michael Selinker

Part one of this adventure, Felicide Decreed, *appeared in issue #48.*

In Part One, the PCs were charged by their superior, High Priest Dunsinaine, to recover several relics stolen from the Church of Harmony by tabaxi who had followed the scent of the divine catnip (see Part One) to Claxton. While recovering the treasure, the PCs discovered that more than normal cats are swarming through Claxton, and learned of the existence of the temple of Bast.

In Part Two, the PCs will invade the cat-infested temple of Bast and come face to face with Manetho Khafre and the Lord of Cats. There they will learn about the rat swarm and its source (the vampire Devington Leither) and about the negative facets of mass felicide. Afterward, the PCs must convince High Priest Dunsinaine to change his mind about cats, at least publicly, and then mount an attack on Devington Leither and his rats. When these tasks are successfully completed, Claxton will be safe from the Darkrot (see Part One).

A New Mission

If the PCs defeated the rakshasa at the end of Part One, they recovered half of Dunsinaine's stolen treasure. If they also successfully negotiated with Iris Duskblossom and her familiar, Morris, they recovered the remaining stolen treasure and learned about the temple of Bast, which is located on the shores of the Blue Axton river. To complete their original mission, they must return the treasure to the Church of Harmony. The PCs easily can find people to help them return the treasure, if they use their authority as agents of the church. If they return the treasure personally (they should if they want to get credit for recovering it), they find Dunsinaine in bed. He sneezes even more when the treasure is brought to him, as it is covered in cat fur. Still, he notes the PCs' speedy service and commends them for it. He quickly orders them to investigate the temple of Bast (Dunsinaine's informants have located it already), to see if it should be shut down in accordance with the city's laws against idolatry (see Part One).

During the adventure, the PCs are free to return to the church for any reason. However, they are only in the mixed graces of High Priest Dunsinaine, because they still smell of cat fur.

The Trip to the Waterfront

Regardless of which path is taken to the waterfront, the trip will be uneventful except for the mountain lion in the alley, described below. Also, the PCs have become famous (or nortorious). Quite a few people saw the flind war party's charge and their combat with the PCs. As they walk the streets, some Claxtonites will praise them for bashing those repulsive fuzzfaces, while others condemn them for bringing violence to Claxton's peaceful atmosphere. There are, of course, thousands of cats in the area, which will probably not have anything interesting to say at all.

As the PCs pass an alley about halfway to the waterfront, they hear a child's scream and a loud roar emanating from within. Suzie Copernicus, a twelve-year-old girl, has been cornered by a mountain lion. The lion considers Suzie a threat despite her inoffensiveness, but will not attack her if it can avoid it. It can be calmed with a *remove fear* spell or an offering of meat, but it still will not be favorably disposed to humans. It doesn't know where the maddening scent comes from, and the scent overpowers its desire to escape the chaos of the city, but not by much. If attacked, it will try to escape unless cornered. Suzie is too terrified to move, and will hyperventilate a few moments after she is cornered. A remove fear would do her wonders as well. Suzie's mother is looking for her, and may easily be found by the PCs.

Mountain lion: AC 6; HD 3+1; hp 15; MV 15″ (spring 15′ up or 20′+ ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 (if both claws hit, two rear claws for 1-4 each); THAC0 16; Int Semi; SZ M; Al N; SA surprised only on a 1.

The Temple of Bast

The temple of Bast is disguised as a shrine of the dead. Above ground, it is a small, nondescript building sandwiched between a shipyard and a smeltery on the east bank of the Blue Axton. The building is surrounded by a three-stair riser leading up to a single, open doorway where an apparently ordinary domestic cat rests. Adding to the disguise is an etched wooden sign which says, "Shrine of the Beloved and Departed." The PCs will be very hard pressed to discover anyone in Claxton who has interred or honored anyone at the shrine, however. Some locals may attest to seeing Manetho Khafre, "the suntanned guy in white," bringing a coffin to the shrine every now and then. If the PCs stake out the place, they will see an occasional cat slink up to the doorway, sniff at the sleeping cat there, and then walk in. This will happen about once every half hour. There may be people in the area who have observed the same thing, and one or two may even have seen a great cat enter. Some people will lie about seeing great cats and will compound the lie by talking about some huge demon with a lion's head and a pink tail with purple blotches. Other false tales may be more believable.

There are two entrances to the temple of Bast. The first is through the front door (1), where a guardian familiar appears to sleep. The second is through an aqueduct (3) just above the river which leads into the antechamber (4) below the entrance chamber (2).

1. Front Door

Tabitha, a guardian familiar, guards the front door. She appears to be sleeping in the doorway. She has detached herself from her wizard's treasure chest, an unheard of act for one of her breed, and has come here to enforce the Cat Lord's will that no one who is not at least part cat should enter the temple. She has been doing just that, although no one that was not at least part cat has tried to enter the temple so far. If any PC tries to mount the steps, Tabitha quickly rises to attention and meows. She attack only if some non-feline tries to cross the threshold. She will not leave the doorway for any reason except to allow a large cat creature to pass by. She can be fought, of course, although her power will insure a long battle indeed. However, talking to Tabitha in her own language may provide two other ways to get through the doorway. The first is to convince her that the PCs really are cats, but just don't look it. This will be extremely difficult, as the familiar can sense most cat characteristics and is extremely skeptical for a creature with only animal intelligence. However, a second tactic which might prove more successful is playing upon her guilt for leaving her treasure. She feels only as much remorse as an animal can, but this may be enough to persuade her to abandon guard duty for the first oath she took.

Guardian familiar: AC 8 (+1/death); HD 1 (+1/death); hp 5 (+5/death); MV 12″ (+2″/death); #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-4/1-4 (+1 each/death); THAC0 variable; Int Ani; SZ S (M after 7th death); Al LG; MR 75%; SA has nine lives (on round after each death it is reborn larger, with +1 cumulative on abilities listed until ninth, permanent death)

2. Entrance Chamber

No matter how long the PCs take to get through the front door, four creatures will be here, as they have been for hours. There is Euphrosyne, a gynosphinx; Heracles, an androsphinx; Mulciber, a criosphinx; and Carric, a wemic. The sphinxes are discussing in their unique fashion the problem of getting through the open trap door to the antechamber below. They are all too big for the door, which can easily accomodate a human-sized creature. Though not one of them actually has a solution to this particular dilemma, each sphinx maintains that its way is best. While they debate, the wemic sits on his haunches in the corner, desiring the catnip and bored to tears with the sphinxes. However, they are blocking the trap door, which is visible from the front entrance.

The argument is guided by each of the three sphinxes' peculiar manner of speaking. Euphrosyne always asks questions, but never speaks in statements. Conversely, Heracles always issues firm manifestos and declarations, but never asks a question. Mulciber always asks questions of Euphrosyne and produces statements to Heracles. The argument over the door might go something like this:

Euphrosyne: "Are you saying you have no idea how to get through the door without destroying the floor?"

Heracles: "Of course I do! We will simply shrink ourselves!"

Euphrosyne: "And how do you propose we will do that?"

Mulciber: "Begging your pardon, Euphrosyne, but why is it an impossibility to enlarge the opening somehow?"

Euphrosyne: "Heracles, will you please tell this snail-headed idiot that he should keep his worthless ideas to himself?"

Heracles: "Keep your ideas to yourself!"

Mulciber: "I was only trying to help!"

Heracles: "Help by keeping your ideas to yourself!"

Euphrosyne: "Are you boys finished yet?"

Meanwhile, Carric, the wemic, is waiting for them to solve the problem, which he fears, correctly, that they will never do. He joined the trio when coming down from the mountains, assuming that he had more in common with them than merely form. He soon discovered that they had nothing in common even with each other, except perhaps a communication barrier. However, he stayed with them because Euphrosyne was able to disguise them as riders on horses so they could pass through the city unmolested. Now that they are here, so close to the maddening scent's source, he is having second thoughts about ever joining them.

If Carric sees anyone enter the chamber who appears to have at least a smidgen of intelligence, he immediately entreats them in Common to help get him and, if possible and necessary, the sphinxes through the trap door. The sphinxes take no note of the PCs unless they do something which allows them to pass through the trap door. In that case, they immediately attempt to dismantle the solution or at least ignore it, for if there is one thing they agree upon, it is that they certainly do not need any help to get through the door.

The wemic is not so proud, and may accompany the PCs downstairs if this is made possible. None of the sphinxes are likely to attack because of their dependence upon each other for instructions, although they will certainly defend themselves. Heracles will never roar in so sacred a temple unless he is provoked. If the player characters become a nuisance, the androsphinx might be tempted to throw a *silence 15' radius* spell on one of the characters, or a *command* or *hold person*. The gynosphinx could use one of her *symbol* spells.

Also in this room are nine wooden sarcophagi. All nine contain fake mummies, crudely carved dummies wrapped in thin bandages. There also are shelves of embalming jars and urns containing ash (of wood).

The trap door leads to an eight-foot drop to the floor of the antechamber below.

Androsphinx: AC -2; HD 12 (Cleric 6); hp 68; MV 18″/30″ (MC:D); #AT 2; Dmg 2-12/2-12; THAC0 9; Int Exc; SZ L; Al CG; SA three roars/day, first causes save vs. wands within 360 yards or feared for three turns, second causes save vs. petrifcation within 200 yards or paralyzed with fright for 1-4 rounds and deafens those smaller than ogres within 30 yards for 2-12 rounds, third saps 2-8 points of strength (save vs. magic) from creatures within 240 yards and those smaller than ogres within 30 yards (front only) are knocked over and stunned for 2-12 rounds (save vs. breath weapon), those not knocked over take 2-16 points of damage.

Cleric spells: *command* (x3), *hold person, silence 15' radius, speak with animals, bestow curse, speak with dead*

Gynosphinx: AC -1; HD 8 (M-U/Cleric 12); hp 56; MV 15″/24″ (MC:D); #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; THAC0 12; Int Gen; SZ L; Al N; SA wand of illusion (17 charges)

Spells: *comprehend languages* (written only), *detect magic, read magic, detect invisibility, locate object, clairaudience, clairvoyance, dispel magic, remove curse, legend lore, symbol of death, symbol of discord, symbol of fear, symbol of hopelessness, symbol of insanity, symbol of pain, symbol of persuasion, symbol of sleep, symbol of stunning*

Criosphinx: AC 0; HD 10; hp 52; MV 12″/24″ (MC:D); #AT 3 on land, 1 butt in air; Dmg 2-8/2-8/3-18; THAC0 10; Int Avg; SZ L; Al N

Wemic: AC 5; HD 5+8; hp 47; MV 12″; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/by weapon; THAC0 13; Int Avg; SZ L; Al N; six javelins, spear, large shield

3. Aqueduct

This aqueduct (drainpipe) is six feet in diameter. It goes thirty feet into the antechamber, but it winnows very gradually to three feet in diameter before it enters the chamber. However, this is very difficult to determine from either end because of the dragonne stuck in the middle of the pipe. He is facing toward the antechamber, and will give a puppy dog look to anyone coming from that end. He will not be able to see anyone coming from the outside end, but he probably will hear them and get very skittish. He does not speak any languages except sphinx and brass dragon. He will not roar unless he is attacked, although his definition of an attack will depend on the circumstances. Any poking probably will remind him of a sword or spear and trigger the roar. Inside the pipe, the roar will reverberate with a metallic ring, limiting the area of effect to the pipe but also forcing saving throws to be made at -2. If it is extricated into the antechamber, it will make a beeline for the catnip.

Dragonne: AC 6 (head)/2 (body); HD 9; hp 45; MV 15″/9″ (MC:D, can only fly 1-3 turns); #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/3-18; THAC0 12; Int Low; SZ L; Al N; roar causes save vs. paralyzation within 120 yards or weakened to 50% strength for 2-12 rounds, those within 30 yards also deafened and attack at -1 for 2-12 rounds)

4. Antechamber

The aqueduct and the trap door from the entrance chamber both lead here. This room is not lit, and the only light comes in through the trap door. The room's occupants all are lurking well out of this shaft of weak light.

The evil cats lurking behind chairs and in the corners include: a displacer beast, a kamadan, a caterwaul, and a nonafel. However, the real catalyst for their actions is the luck eater curled up on a shelf. The luck eater is a small, golden-furred cat that has the evil creatures under its sway. Thus, they are laying in wait for prey. They attack as soon as they can, but all of their attack and damage rolls, and their saving throws, are at -2 as long as the luck eater continues to purr. All other creatures within 30 feet also incur this penalty unless they make saving throws vs. spell every round until the luck eater is killed.

NOTE: If either the androsphinx or the dragonne has roared, remember to apply any applicable effects to the cats in this room.

The kamadan leads the attack by blasting its sleep breath at anyone entering. Then the caterwaul drops from the ceiling, screeching, and the displacer beast leaps at any creature that enters. If two or more creatures enter together, the displacer attacks the strongest-looking creature. The nonafel tries to attack a weak-looking opponent with one tail lash during the first round, and will concentrate all of its attacks on that character until he or she is dead. It disassociates on the second round (or the first round after a surprise attack), swarming the PC with little panthers, and then reassociates on the next round. It shifts in or out of singular form every round, healing itself if applicable. The luck eater does not attack, but its purring will be noticeable even while all the evil cats are roaring.

If all the evil cats are killed before the luck eater is slain, it bonds itself to the

PCs, continuing to purr until it hooks at least one of them. If the luck eater is killed before the last of the evil cats, any survivors will regain their senses in three rounds, fleeing into the inner sanctum if still alive.

This chamber is the antechamber for the temple of Bast, and as such contains large numbers of idols, tapestries, altars, candles, thick rugs, and many other objects. The room also contains a folded cot and a heavy bead curtain (5).

Luck eater: AC 7; HD 4; hp 19; MV 15″; #AT 0; Dmg 0; THAC0 15; Int Low; SZ S; Al N; SA surprise 1-4; first purr causes those within 30′ to save vs. spell or be attracted, affected creatures want to keep and protect luck eater for 2-5 hours, can alter purr to cause creatures to attack others or themselves; aura saps luck at -2 on combat an saving throws within 30′ (save vs. spell)

Displacer beast: AC 4 (2 if displaced); HD 6; hp 30; MV 15″; #AT 2; Dmg 2-8/2-8; THAC0 13; Int Semi; SZ L; Al N; SA 3′ displacement causes first attack on beast to miss, all other attacks suffer -2 to hit; saves as Fighter 12 +2

Kamadan: AC 4; HD 4+2; hp 23; MV 18″; #AT 8; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 + 1-4 per snake head; THAC0 15; Int Low; SZ L; Al N (CE); SA sleep breath in cone 30′ long x 10′ wide causes creatures to fall asleep (those above 4 HD or 3rd level save vs. breath to avoid effects); 4 snake heads

Caterwaul: AC 4; HD 4+2; hp 27; MV 18″ (24″ bursts); #AT series of 3/2; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6; THAC0 15; Int Low; SZ M; Al CE; SA +2 dexterity bonus on saves; screech on first attack does 1-8 hp damage to all within 60′ (save vs. breath negates damage); 95% climb walls; 75% move silently and hide in shadows

Nonafel: AC parent 5/children 6; HD parent 9/children 2; hp parent 54/children 6; MV parent 9″/children 12″; #AT 1 each; Dmg parent 2-20/children 1-8; THAC0 parent 12/children 16; Int Low; SZ parent L/children S; Al CE; SA parent disassociates into nine children and can reassociate (simultaneous blink) at will when children are within 50′; reassociation regenerates 1 hp per surviving child to parent and thus children on next disassociation, can coordinate all attacks of children, can attack when disassociating or reassociating

5. Entrance to the Inner Sanctum

This stairwell is fronted by a heavy bead curtain which sparkles in any light, casting a panoply of rainbow dots on the walls and anything in front of it. It is non-magical, but its thickness prevents the cat cacophony below from entering the antechamber unless it is partially opened. When the PCs open the curtain, they hear yowls, growls, and roars, and they notice a faint mint smell. The wooden stairs curve, ending on the 2′ high ledge in the inner sanctum below.

6. Inner Sanctum

This large, rough chamber is a sight to behold, for it is here that the Cat Lord holds court. He is likely to be in cat form when the PCs enter, unless he has some reason to expect their arrival. If someone enters the room, he leaps from his position to the ornate throne on the risers in the far south end of the sanctum.

Manetho Kafre, who wears white robes and his cat mask, is constantly moving about the room, but his usual station is at three 10-foot vats of milk, which are getting low when the PCs enter. Manetho steadily fills bowls of milk for the more than 1,000 cats in the chamber.

The cats include the following: 982 domestic cats, 706 wild cats, 6 jaguars, 3 leopards, 2 black panthers (leopards), 1 mated pair of lions with 3 cubs, 1 female mountain lion looking for her mate, 1 spotted lion, 1 giant lynx, 2 tigers and 1 cub, 1 smilodon trading baffled glances with the spotted lion, 1 cheetah, and a group of minimals (a jaguar, a leopard, a male lion, a mountain lion, a lynx, and a tiger) who have staked out a spot in a box on a ledge. In addition, a guardian daemon in the form of a wild cat protects the catnip that has been spread all over the floor.

When humans enter the inner sanctum, a few of the cats begin a yowling wail that is taken up by every cat in the chamber except the daemon, the lynx, and the Cat Lord, who leaps to the throne. The wail is a deafening, infuriating sound which silences all conversation in the room.

Rexfelis allows this to continue for a minute, assuming no human attacks, any cat, and then hisses very loudly, silencing the cats. He silently glares at the PCs, but telepathically demands, "Who are you to invade my sanctum while we dine?"

Regardless of the answer, the Cat Lord can determine the full truth, evasions do not work. He will not be pleased to learn that the PCs are representatives of the Church of Harmony.

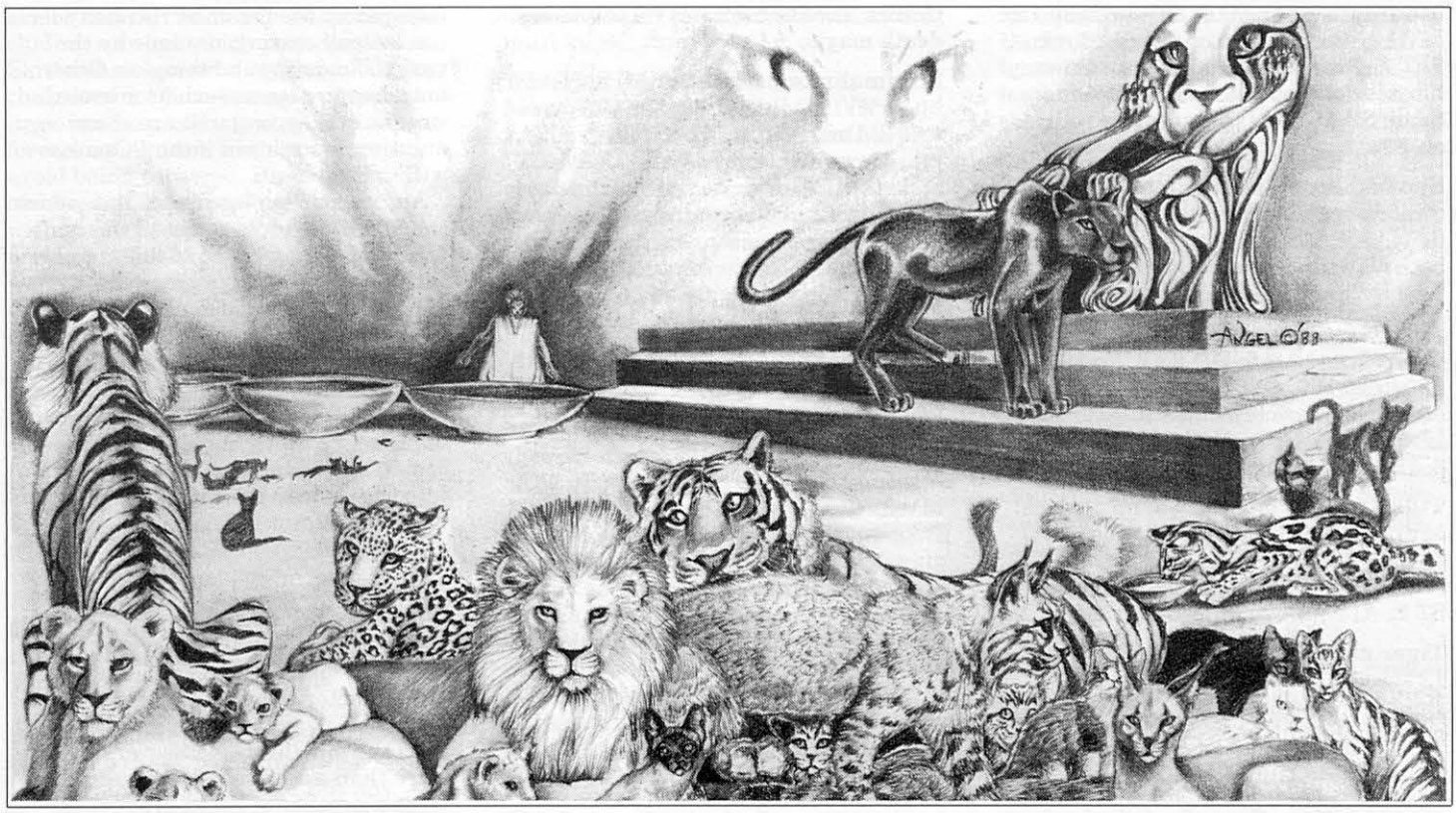
He growls, "Soooooooo, you come from the man who wants all of my friends exterminated so his nose will not trouble him. Hmmm? You come to kill the cats yourself, yes? I do not think they will appreciate that sentiment, yes, my friends?" If the PCs make any threatening moves, they will be swarmed by cats, which pin them to the ground. If they kill a single cat, the Cat Lord will be merciless in allowing the cats to have them as an after-dinner treat.

If, on the other hand, the PCs are polite, they may argue animal politics. The Cat Lord is not favorably disposed to the PCs, and is unlikely to change that opinion. Manetho Khafre, however, will see the PCs as a possible resource to slay the vampire that Rexfelis discovered.

Although the PCs may force it to go another course, the conversation will probably go something like this: the Cat Lord asks the PCs why he should let them leave his domain alive, as he expects that they will probably go back to their church and return with an army of exterminators. There is not likely to be a reasonable response to this, and any show of strength probably will get the PCs killed. However, Manetho Khafre intervenes for the PCs, saying, "My lord, perhaps you are overlooking the potential for a boon, no?"

Rexfelis replies, "You are jabbering, Manetho Khafre. Tend to your milk, yes?" Thus silenced, Manetho goes back to disbursing milk, but the PCs can take advantage of this situation by requesting from Manetho exactly what boon he refers to, perhaps sweetening the kitty by saying that they will do what the Cat Lord wants. If this is done, Manetho will say to Rexfelis, "Please, my lord, I beg of you. Tell them why your cats are so important to the city's survival."

Rexfelis snaps, "Priest of Bast, you will be silent, yes? They are agents of a hostile power, and will go scurrying back to their precious high priest rather than saving their city from the fate it deserves. See how they have tried to destroy the only possible salvation, my cats."



Rexfelis will tire of Manetho's pleas, and say, "Oh, very well, then, priest. If only for my confrere Bast, I will heed your words, yes? I will tell these wretched creatures what will happen, although they will not be able to halt the Darkrot. You know of what I speak, yes?" (They do not.) "The Darkrot, you fools! The kill inside, yes? The Black Plague, you have heard that name? It will sweep through your city and all the land, killing all of the humans and all of the dogs! Then my cats will be free to roam where they would! I have brought the divine catnip here, but there could be catnip for all! It would be glorious, do you not agree, yes? Oh, but you would be dead."

Before he can order his cats to attack the PCs, Manetho will again intervene, shouting, "Wait, wait! Do not misunderstand! The Cat Lord does not bring this fate to this land! It is the vampire who calls the rats with his sweet song! The rats carry the fleas which carry the plague! It is they who must be stopped, not we!"

The Cat Lord will confirm this, but still will not trust the PCs, asserting that will simply bring the Church down on him and doom all of his cats. "But better death for the thousands of humans in this city by my hand than death for my cats!" he threatens.

The only way for the PCs to calm Rexfelis's rage is to tell him that they will personally go to Dunsinaine and try to convince him to call off the edict condemning cats. If the PCs do not suggest this, Manetho will do so for them.

> "Very well, you may go to slay your vampire. His name is Devington Leither, the famous bard, and he lies in his mausoleum in the east side cemetery. If you do this, my cats will feast on the rats he has brought. But then you still must go to your priest and convince him to rescind his edict. If you tell anyone of my presence in the process, my revenge will be swift. You agree to these terms, yes?"

If the PCs agree, Rexfilis still will not trust them, but lets them go, with cats nipping at their heels.

Domestic cats (982): AC 6; HD 1-5 hp; hp 3 each; MV 15″ @7″; #AT 2; Dmg 1-2/1 (if claw hits, rear claw attack for 1-2); Int Anl; SZ S; Al N; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only on 1

Wild cats (706): AC 5; HD 1; hp 5 each; MV 18″ @9″; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-2 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1-2/1-2); Int Anl; SZ S; Al N; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only on 1

Jaguars (6): AC 6; HD 4+1; hp 19 each; MV 15″ (leap 30′); #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 2-5/2-5); Int Semi; SZ L; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Leopards (3): AC 6; HD 3+2; hp 16 each; MV 12″ (leap 20′ up or 25′ ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1-4/1-4); Int Semi; SZ M; Al N; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only on 1

Male lion: AC 5 (forequarters)/6 (hindquarters); HD 5+2; hp 26; MV 12″ (leap 30′); #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 2-7/2-7); Int Semi; SZ L; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Female lion: AC 6; HD 5+2; hp 26; MV 12″ (leap 30′); #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-10 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 2-7/2-7; SZ L; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Lion cubs (3): AC 6; HD 2+3; hp 12 each; MV 12″; #AT 0; Dmg 0; Int Semi; SZ M; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Mountain lion: AC 6; HD 3+1; hp 15; MV 15" (leap 15' up or ahead 20'+); #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1-4/1-4); Int Semi; SZ M; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Spotted lion: ; AC 5 (forequarters)/6 (hindquarters); HD 6+2; hp 31; MV 12" (leap 30'); #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 2-8/2-8); Int Semi; SZ L; Al N; surprised only on 1

Giant lynx: AC 6; HD 2+2; hp 16; MV 12" (leap 15'); #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4 (if claws hit, rear claws attack for 1-3/1-3); Int Very; SZ M; Al N; SA surprise 5 in 6; 75% find traps

Tigers (2): AC 6; HD 5+5; hp 28 each; MV 12" (leap 10' up or 50' ahead) #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-10 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 2-8/2-8); Int Semi; SZ L; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Tiger cub: AC 6; HD 3+3; hp 17; MV 12" (leap 10' up or 50' ahead); #AT 0; Dmg 0; Int Semi; SZ M; Al N; SA surprised only on 1

Sabre-tooth tiger (smilodon): AC 6; HD 7+2; hp 34; MV 12" (leap 10' up or 50' ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/2-12 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 2-8/2-8); Int Anl; SZ L; Al N; SA surprised only on 1; +2 to hit with bite

Cheetah: AC 6; HD 3; hp 14; MV 15" (45" burst for 3 rounds, leap 10' up or 20' ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/2-8 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1-2/1-2); Int Semi; SZ M; Al N; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only on 1

Minimal jaguar: AC 8; HD 1; hp 5; MV 10" (leap 20'); #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1-2 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1/1); Int Semi; SZ S; Al CN; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only 1 in 12; +2 to saving throws; save as 4+1 HD vs. poison and death magic; +4 vs. charm

Minimal leopard: AC 8; HD 1; hp 5; MV 8" (leap 13' up or 17' ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1-2 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1/1); Int Semi; Sz S; Al CN; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only 1 in 12; +2 to saving throws; save as 3+2 HD vs. poison and death magic; +4 vs. charm

Minimal lion AC 9 (forequarters)/8 (hindquarters); HD 1+3; hp 8; MV 8" (leap 20'); #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1-3 (if both claws hit, rear claws for 1/1); Int Semi; SZ S; Al CN; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only 1 in 12; +2 to saving throws; save as 5+2 HD vs. poison and death magic; +4 vs. charm

Minimal mountain lion: AC 8; HD 1-1; hp 4; MV 10" (leap 10' up or 13' ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 1/1/1-2 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1/1); Int Semi; SZ S; Al CN; SA surprise 3 in 6; surprised only 1 in 12; +2 to saving throws, save as 3+1 HD vs. poison and death magic; +4 vs. charm

Minimal lynx AC 8; HD 1/4; hp 2; MV 8" (leap 10'); #AT 1; Dmg 1; Int Semi; SZ S; Al CN; surprise 5 in 6, surprised only 1 in 6; +2 to saving throws; save as 1 HD vs. poison and death magic; +4 vs. charm

Minimal tiger AC 8; HD 2+1; hp 10; MV 8" (leap 7' up or 30' ahead); #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-3 (if both claws hit, rear claws attack for 1-2/1-2); Int Semi; SZ S; Al CN; surprise 3 in 6; surprised only 1 in 12; +2 to saving throws; save as 5+5 HD vs. poison and death magic, +4 vs. charm

If the PCs survive their encounter with the Cat Lord and his minions, they will emerge from the Temple of Bast in time to see the setting sun reflected in the river.

Part Three: Rats In The System

To the Cemetery

Despite the setting sun, the PCs are not obligated to to attack Devington Leither's mausoleum tonight. If they wait until morning, Leither will not change his tactics appreciably, although he will not be able to go outside in the daylight. Some of the wererats will be on watch regardless of what time the PCs come to the place.

The PCs can do several things before going to the cemetery. One option is to go straight to Dunsinaine with the news. If they go to the Church of Harmony office for any reason, see that section. The Cat Lord is monitoring the PCs' actions. If they tell of his presence in the temple, see the section on his revenge, below.

Another option is to stock up on the standard vampire-killing implements. However, the PCs may be hard pressed to locate everything they might want. Lawful good holy symbols are considered objects of idolatry, and it will be a rare Claxtonite who will admit to owning one, let alone selling one. What little holy water is available is manufactured by the Curch of Harmony for use in spell casting, or made by the various underground temples. Other anti-vampire items such as mirrors, wooden stakes, or garlic are common, and simple to obtain if the PCs are willing to search.

Any expedition into the slums, which the PCs could cross to get to the cemetery, may turn up an unusual number of rats.

The PCs easily can find the cemetery, as there is only one major burial site on the east side. Those who have heard of Devington Leither may know where he is buried, although they do know he is a vampire. Several people around the cemetery will have seen a griffon glide into the cemetery, but they did not see it leave.

The Cemetery

The east side cemetery is the fifth largest within the city limits, although there are many larger ones outside. This cemetery contains a mixture of headstones and mausoleums, mostly from the middle class. It covers a little more than a square half mile, and contains a number of slight grades and hills, although the highest point is only fifty feet above the lowest.

The entire cemetery is surrounded by an eight-foot-high brick wall, which easily can be scaled. There are four main gates, at the north, east, southeast, and northwest corners. Devington Leither's mausoleum is at the southwest corner, immediately adjacent to a sewer tunnel. A paved path runs throughout the entire area.

The cemetery is swarming with rats; all are normal rats except five, which are wererats inhabiting the central watchman's house. They have taken over the cemetery on the vampire master's instructions, and one has assumed the role of the aged cemetery watchman, Mr. Pottersfield. It is unlikely that all of them will be awake at any time, but they have alerted all of the other rats in the cemetery to report any intruders.

The wererats work to destroy any intruders. They each have a special weapon or tactic to assist them.

Chakchak, the leader, carries a *philter of persuasiveness,* and has assumed the form of the old watchman. Twikchak is a master of distance combat, carrying a short composite bow, blowgun, atlatl and javelin, and an aklys. Twitterchak, a former knight, wears a full suit of

armor and carries heavy weapons, including a sword which projects silence. Skitterchak has *beads of force.* Tiktikchak does not have a magic or special item, but he prefers to stay in giant rat form, leaping from target to target to avoid being cornered. He hates being cornered. If this happens, he attacks with great ferocity (+2 to hit and on damage rolls). Note, however, that the wererats cannot summon any giant rats, because the vampire's pipesong cannot be overridden.

When the wererats learn about the intruding PCs or when someone calls for the front gate to be opened, Chakchak drinks his *philter* and goes, in his caretaker form, to wherever the PCs are. The rest of the rats slink toward the PCs, including Twitterchak, who will mask his clanking armor with his sword of silence.

While the rats surround the party, Chakchak calls out in his imitation elderly voice, "Who's that going here? Show yourself." If he sees them, he chuckles and says, "Well, then, I thought you were graverobbers or something like that." If they are wearing their armbands, he adds, "But any agents of the Church are welcome in Mr. Pottersfield's cemetery, of course." He seems extremely congenial, and uses the *philter's* power to suggest that the PCs accompany him on a tour through the cemetery to whatever loved one they have come to pay respects to. (Saves vs. this suggestion are at -2 because it is reasonable and plausible.) If the PCs accompany Chakchak, the wererats position themselves and attack at their leisure.

Before any attack, "Mr. Pottersfield" tries to chat with the PCs to find out what they are doing here, how much they know about everything going on in town, especially the plague of cats. He does not mention the rats, although if asked, he will say, "Yes, there is a slight increase in the rat population." He also tries to learn the party's strengths and weaknesses.

The wererats attack in unison, except for Chakchak, who will not attack if his comrades gain surprise (he plays the Pottersfield role to the hilt). Twikchak fires arrows from atop a mausoleum, switching to his blowgun when someone comes within range. Twitterchak attacks from behind with his sword of silence. Skitterchak throws beads from about 20′ away. Only Tiktikchak leaps among the PCs, bouncing from one to the other. He will soon be joined by Chakchak. All the wererats will attack until killed.

Wererats (5): AC 6; HD 3+1; hp see below; MV 12″//6″ in giant rat form; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; THAC0 16; Int Very; SZ S-M; Al LE; SA hit only by magical or silver weapons, surprise on 1-4, communicate lycanthropy, assume human or giant rat form at will, summon and control 2-12 giant rats

Chakchak: hp 20, *philter of persuasiveness,* broad sword

Twikchak: hp 16, short composite bow and 20 arrows, blowgun with 10 poisoned darts (save vs. poison or suffer 1-6 hp damage per round until constitution check is made), atlatl and one javelin, aklys, dagger

Twitterchak: hp 28, plate mail and large shield (AC 2), two handed sword of silence +3 (allows weilder to project *silence 15′ radius* for 3 turns/day), battle axe, dagger

Skitterchak: hp 15, long sword, three beads of force

Tiktikchak: hp 19, dexterity 18 (AC 2)

The Mausoleum of Devington Leither

The door to this modest mausoleum is open, and rats can be seen scampering into it. On the outside it is a normal monument 15 feet square. It bears the words, "RESTING HERE DEVINGTON LEITHER. HIS SONG IS STILLED BUT STILL LIVES." To the left of the mausoleum is a griffon skeleton, picked clean by the rats.

Swarming rats: To speed play, and scare the PCs, allow the rats to attack in swarms of 10-20. A swarm takes 1-3 melee rounds to form.

Rat, normal: HD 1/4; hp 1 each; MV 15″; #AT 1; Dmg 1 + 2% chance of passing early Darkrot symptoms (save vs. poison); THAC0 2nd 20; Int Anl; SZ S; Al N(E); SA swarm

Rat swarm: AC 5; HD N/A; hp 5+1 per rat (there can be no fewer than 10 and no more than 20 rats in a swarm); MV 12″; #AT 1; Dmg 1-12; THAC0 19; Int Ani; SZ M; AL N; SA piercing weapons do one point of damage, area attacks (flaming oil, *fireball,* etc.) affect individual rats; when reduced to 0 hp swarm dissolves and 5d4 rats are killed, survivors can join new swarms or attack individually; each round spent within 10′ of a swarm causes a 5% chance to contract Darkrot (from jumping fleas), save vs. poison negates; each successful hit causes a 10% chance to contact Darkrot, save vs. poison negates; can ignore the effects of weapons in non-leathal combat (if the swarm survives the attack).

Giant rats: HD 1/2; hp 3 each; MV 12″//6″; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 + 5% chance of passing early plague symptoms (save vs. poison negates); Int Semi; SZ S; Al N(E)

1. Entrance Chamber

There are about about fifty normal rats here at any time. They are hungry, but not starved, and can be easily scared away. They are on their way down to the sewers, and others will come to take their place within minutes. There is a stairwell to the burial chamber below, where many rats and a faint pipe tune can be heard. There are many rats on their way down the stairs to the tomb.

2. Tomb

Every horizontal surface in this room is crammed with rats or giant rats. There are 212 normal rats, 18 giant rats, and one of Devington Leither's coffins packed into this 15′ × 15′ × 8′ tomb. There is a gaping hole in the south wall that leads to the sewers. Pipesong emanates from the hole. The rats will swarm all over anything that walks through the room, attacking to kill. A *cloudkill* will kill all of the rats. A simple *fireball* will blast everything in the tomb and a huge number of rats in the sewers and perhaps creatures on the stairwell unless the door is closed.

3. Sewer Conduit

There are 356 rats and 29 giant rats here. They attack any non rat that enters the conduit, which is seven feet square and extends in both directions. The water and sludge mixture in the conduit runs sluggishly, but does count as running water. However, there are tens of millions of rats in the entire sewer system. They are drawn here by the pipe tune emanating from the crude door at #4 (see part one). The rats are especially thick around the door.

4. Devington Leither's Sewer Crypt

Leither notices any activity involving his rats in the sewer system, but will not stop playing even if the door is ripped off the hinges. He waits here in this dry chamber with 12 vapor rats, which are intelligent enough to understand his commands. When the cham-

ber is breached, Leither continues playing to attract more rats from outside. If any rats remain in the tomb or conduit, they swarm, and immediately move to the attack. If the tomb and conduit are empty, more rats will arrive every 1d4 rounds. The newcomers will be a swarm of normal rats, 1d10+10 rats, (75%) or 1d3+1 giant rats (25%).

Leither concentrates on playing his pipes until they are negated, destroyed, or taken away. Until deprived of his pipes, he attacks with his gaze only. The vapor rats shift in and out of vapor form, attacking from different positions each round. Remember the *stinking cloud* effect when vapor rats are hit in combat.

If Leither is deprived of the use of his pipes, he retains control over the vapor rats while the others skitter away. He assumes gaseous form, moving in and out of the vaporized rats so that his location will not be easily charted. Then he assumes normal form to attack with a blow to drain levels, and then shifts into gaseous form to appear the next round, perhaps to cast a spell. He keeps his sword securely lashed to his belt; he does not want it used upon him.

If Leither feels he must flee, he may read his *scroll of protection from water* and dive into the sewer, turning to gaseous form as he does so. When reduced to 10 hp or less, he summons 100 normal rats, which arrive in a single round. He uses these to keep the PCs away from at least one coffin. If he is reduced to 0 hp, he assumes gaseous form and tries to reach one of the coffins. If a PC guards the coffin, the 100 rats swarm him until they are killed or the PC gives up.

The vampire might take the fight outside if it is dark.

During any battle, he taunts the PCs, since they are obviously working for the Church of Harmony which ended his singing career. He also carefully directs the rats' attacks, such as having them swarm over PCs' weapon hands or swarm into their clothes (treat these as grappling attacks).

If the PCs escape the cemetery without defeating the vampire, and plan a second assault, all rat and giant rat casualties will be replaced when they return. During the second attempt, the normal rats will attack the PCs from the moment they step into the mausoleum.

Vapor rats (12): AC 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; MV 12″/18″/6″/(1″)(MC: A); #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; THAC0 16; Int Low; SZ S; AL C ; SA turn to gasous form; when gaseous immune to all attacks except magical fire and exceptionally strong winds; emits stinking cloud to 1 target 5'-8' away when wounded or killed

The Church of Harmony Office

At some point, either before or after taking on the vampire, the player characters are likely to come back here, where High Priest Dunsinaine first gave them their assignment.

If the PCs come here directly from the temple of Bast, they reek of cat fur, although only Dunsinaine will notice this. He sneezes even more violently than before, and orders the PCs to be drawn and quartered. This will not happen, of course, but a few attendants try to usher the PCs out before Dunsinaine really gets angry. If the PCs take baths and clean out their possessions after this, or do so before they come to Dunsinaine, he will be considerably more disposed to them, but his attention still is focused on his malady.

If, in this case, the PCs tell him about the Cat Lord, Dunsinaine will be alarmed and calls for his robes. He immediately forgets his allergy, and dispatches messengers to all the city council members to roust them for an emergency session. Then he demands that the PCs accompany him by carriage to the grand public meeting hall and testify before the council about what they saw at the temple. Dunsinaine deftly uses this opportunity to pressure and terrify the council members to passing an emergency resolution supporting his ant-cat edict. Unless the PCs can out politic Dunsinaine, which is a tall order, the council will place the city militia at his disposal, and within two hours they will be hastily mobilized for an attack on the Temple of Bast. As the soldiers march on the temple, the Cat Lord takes his revenge, see below.

However, if the PCs tell Dunsinaine about the rats and the vampire, he is only halfheartedly interested; his current disease interests him far more than any potential one. He tells them to dispatch the threat if they feel so inclined.

When the PCs attempt to convince the High Priest to abandon his crusade against the cats, they will face the most difficult challenge of the adventure. The course of this action will have to be determined by the PCs and the outcome is left to the DM. However, the following factors must be considered: Dunsinaine hates cats, he is violently allergic to them, is not capable of rational thought while having an allergic reaction. There is no cure for allergies short of a *wish*. Dunsinaine already has made a public proclamation and never reverses them; he thinks he would undermine the faith in the Church of Harmony's infallibility if he did so. Dunsinaine believes the city council will soon fall in line with him on the issue; he is a very charismatic man with a *ring of human influence* and spells like *enthrall* at his command. He has many responsibilities and cannot be kept long in any conversation. He does not like people dictating anything to him. He and others in the church can cast disease curing spells; he thinks church attendance might benefit from a plague, although the negative side effects (mass death) could decrease worship. And, probably most importantly, he thinks he is in command of the situation.

These defenses will be hard to breach, but the PCs must try if they are to save Claxton. In any confrontation before the council, Dunsinaine will use some of his spells, such as *silence* if the player characters become too much of a nuisance. However, he will not cast spells to harm them, unless they attack him.

The Cat Lord's Revenge

Despite what he said, Rexfelis will not take revenge upon the PCs if they tell average citizens of his presence. They will have to tell someone who will inform the city council or officials of the Church of Harmony before he gets very angry. If Dunsinaine finds out about the Cat Lord, he will use the knowledge to great political advantage. If this occurs, the Cat Lord will take the following swift revenge:

While the armies are mobilizing for an attack on the temple, Rexfelis telepathically calls every cat in the city to come directly to him, regardless of interference. None can resist this call, and thousands of cats and cat creatures converge upon the temple within an hour.

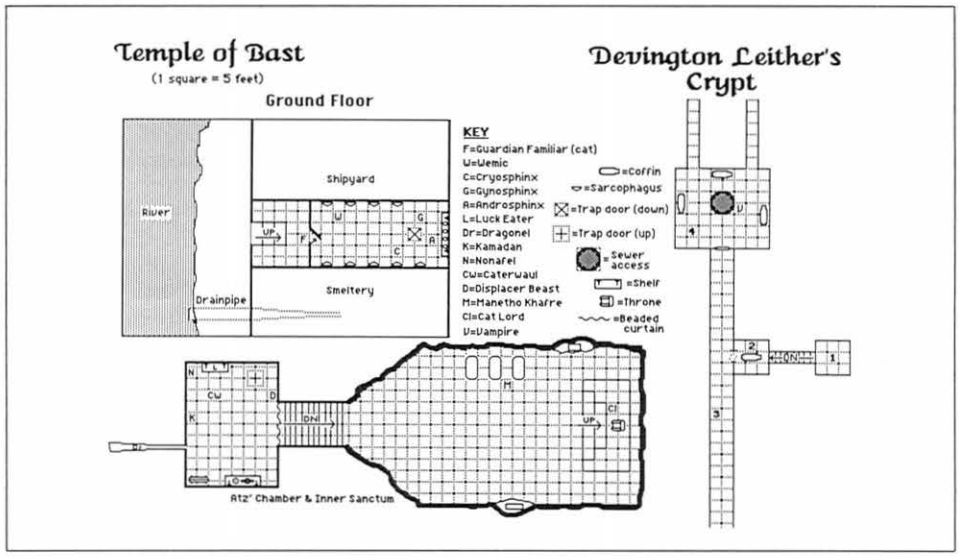
Once all of the cats are assembled, he will, with Bast's assistance and in full view of any humans watching, teleport himself and every cat around him to a location thousands of miles away. This is his swift revenge.

While it may not seem so terrible at first, the DM and PCs must remember

that there are tens of millions of rats in the city, and the Darkrot will mutate to lethal stage in two weeks, vampire or no vampire. The cats were Claxton's only salvation from the plague, and they will not return.

The End of the Cataclysm

If Devington Leither is slain and the anti-cat edict is rescinded, Dunsinaine will publicly call for an end to the slaying of cats, turning the occasion into a grand political triumph by explaining how Claxtonites have evolved beyond idolatry. The Cat Lord will be pleased with the PCs' success and turn his cats loose on the rats of Claxton. The cats will disperse to their normal homes within in a few weeks, with the cat-rat balance maintained and the Darkrot averted.



Major NPCs

High Priest Grandest Dunsaniane: Cl 13; AC 3; hp 78; MV 12"; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; THAC0 12; AL LN; S 13, I 13, W 15, D 10, C 18, CH 18, CM 16

Magic Items: *bracers of defense AC 3, necklace of prayer beads (atonement, blessing, curing, karma), ring of human influence, staff of striking* (23 charges), *amulet of life protection,* plus other items in the church

Spells: *bless, ceremony, command, cure light wounds, detect evil, light, penetrate disguise, protection from evil, augury, detect charm, detect life, enthrall, hold person, know alignment, silence 15' radius, continual light, cure disease, death's door, dispel magic, locate object, magical vestment, cloak of bravery, cure serious wounds, detect lie, tongues, quest, true seeing*

Devington Leither, Vampire: Bd 10; HD 10; AC 1; hp 65; MV 12"/18"; #AT 1; Dmg 5-10 + drain 2 levels or by weapon +4; THAC0 10; AL CE; S 18/76, I 16, W 16, D 15, C 18, CH 18, CM 18

Magic Items: *sword +1 flame tongue, pipes of the sewers, scroll of protection from water, ring of animal friendship*

Spells: *detect magic, shocking grasp, wall of fog, darkness 15' radius* (x2), *detect invisibility, hold person, non-detection, improved invisibility*

Bard abilities: PP 45, DN 60, CW 90, RL 60, influence reactions at -3 to the save, raise morale for 10 rounds, extraordinary effects with *pipes of the sewers*

Vampire abilities: melee hit drains 2 levels, hit only by magical weapons, regenerate 3 hp/round, assumes gaseous form at 0 hp, immunities (sleep, charm, hold, paralysis, poison), half-damage from cold and electricity, assume gaseous from at will, shapechange into large bat at will, gaze causes *charm* (save at -2), summon rats (enhanced by *pipes of the sewers* and bard ability), 10-100 bats or 3-18 wolves, create new vampires, holy water causes 2-7 hp damage, garlic causes hesitation for 1-4 rounds, cannot pass lawful good holy symbol or mirror, sunlight kills in 1 turn), running water removes 1/3 of full hit points lost per round, wooden stake makes helpless until removed, or until permanently slain by severing head and filling mouth with holy wafers.

Manetho Khafre, Priest of Bast: Cl 7; AC 5; hp 37; MV 24"; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; AL CG; S 14, I 13, W 14, D 18, C 14, CH 6, CM 10

Magic Items: *boots of striding and springing, gauntlets of swimming and climbing, cat mask* (allows infravision and excellent hearing), *figurines of wondrous power (two golden lions), flail +1*

Spells: *create water, cure light wounds* (x2), *penetrate disguise, purify food & drink, messenger, snake charm, speak with animals, create food & water, meld into stone, snakes to sticks*

Rexfelis, The Cat Lord: T 19 or Mk 13; HD 19; AC -9; hp 81; MV 27"//9" (+ 30' spring); #AT 3 (special) or 1 or 5/2; Dmg 7-12/7-12/9-16 or by weapon +8 or 5-17 per open hand attack; Al N; S 20, I 19, W 17, D 23, C 16, CH 13 (25 to felines, 22 to werecats, 18 to partial felines and ailurophiles, 7 to ailurophobes), CM 20

Spell-like abililes: (at will) *blur, detect evil/good, hypnotism, improved invisibility, speed (as potion),* and *telepathy;* (9/day) *dimension door;* (2/day) *etherealness, haste;* (1/day); *astral travel, teleport without error*

Special Abilities: +4 to hit and quintuple damage on backstab, thief abilities (PP 165, OL 139, FT 129, MS 132, HS 127, DN 95, CW 109.7, RL 80), fall any distance for no damage when eight feet or less from a wall, +6 dmg with weapon (no strength bonuses), stun opponent on attack roll 5 over number needed to hit, automatic kill on stun if percentage roll is under opponent's AC, save vs. petrification to dodge normal missiles, save vs. any attack which allows save and take no damage, only 10% likely to be surprised, speak with animals and plants, 88% resistance to ESP, immune to disease, poison, haste, slow, geas, quest, self-induced catalepsy for 26 turns, heal 8-11 hp on self/day, 70% resistance to charm spells, quivering palm 1/week, *shape change* to black cat, panther or human, automatic initiative, always lands on feet, summon felines, spit in cat form (save vs. spells or permanently blinded), yowl causes all creatures within 19' except felines stunned for 1-4 rounds), lick wounds to heal 2d4 hp damage 9/day, hearing and vision 5 times human maximum, ultravision to 120', infravision 300', 99% move silently, speaks all feline languages, immune to psionics. ❑

The Mutant's Armory

Part Three: Armor

by Kim Eastland

Part one of this series, Hand-held Weapons, *appeared in issue #47. Part two,* Grenades and Explosives, *appeared in issue #48.*

Notes Regarding Defenses

Armor: Only one type of armor can be worn at one time. However, a character's best armor class, whether armor or natural, is always used. Even when a character's natural armor class is being used, any unusual properties of the armor worn (double damage, half damage, etc.) are still in effect. Armor does not protect against airborne attacks (gas, diseases, etc.) unless the unit is airtight. Wearing armor reduces radiation and sonic attacks by -1RF.

Shields: Shields reduce the aggressor's attack rank by -2CS against a limited number of frontal or shielded flank attacks according to the shield's size. *Small Shields* protect against the first attack per turn. The hand on the shield arm is free to hold items while the shield is worn, and the character can use two-handed weapons.
Medium Shields protect against the first two attacks. The hand on the shield arm is not free to hold other items, and the character cannot use two-handed weapons.
Large Shields protect against all applicable attacks. They are massive and firmly strapped into place. They take three turns to remove. The character cannot use two-handed weapons, and he suffers a -2 dexterity penalty while wearing the shield.

Shields can protect a character's items from attacks that can destroy them (corrosives, fire, etc.). A shield rolls its save vs. such attacks before any items behind it do; a successful spectrum result for the shield automatically protects all items behind the shield. If the shield fails the save it is destroyed and all the items behind it also must save.

Helmets: Helmets are considered only when an attack is directed at the head or comes from above. Compare the helmet's construction to the rest of the character's armor. If the helmet's AC is

Armor Chart

Armor Type	AC_1	Effects
No Armor	0	CO 1t, DD corrosives
Heavy Furs/Clothes	1(-5)	CO 2t, AD & VA corrosives
Albedo	2(-10)	IN laser
Bark	2(-10)	CO 3t, VA corrosives
Leather	2(-10)	VA cold & corrosives
Plastic, partial	2(-10)	AD maser, CO 5t, VA cold
Skeinsuit	2(-10)	HD sharp or blunt hand held weapons and low velocity projectiles (sling stones, arrows, black powder musket balls, etc.)
Wood Sheath	2(-10)	CO 4t, VA corrosives
Carapace, partial	3(-15)	AD maser, HD corrosives
Chain Mail, partial	3(-15)	AD cold & heat, DD electrical, HD maser
Deadsuit	3(-15)	Note 2
Plasteel Sheath	3(-15)	VA cold
Studded Leather	3(-15)	HD maser, VA cold
Synthvelope	3(-15)	DD maser, IN electrical & rafflurs, 3/4 MV
Kevlar	4(-20)	CO 8t, HD sharp or blunt high velocity projectiles (bullets, needler ammo, shrapnel, slugs, etc.)
Plant Fiber,partial	4(-20)	AD maser, CO 4t, VA cold & corrosives
Plastic, full	4(-20)	CO 11t, DD maser, HI, VA cold
Plate Mail, partial	4(-20)	AD cold & heat, DD electrical, HD maser, 3/4 MV
Ring Mail	4(-20)	AD cold & heat, DD electrical, HD maser, 3/4 MV
Chain Mail, full	5(-25)	AD cold & heat, DD electrical, HD maser, 2/3 MV
Gridsuit	5(-25)	HD maser, HI, IN bolt weapons & electrical, 1/2 MV
Plant Fiber, full	5(-25)	CO 6t, DD maser, HI, VA-cold
Stabilsuit	5(-25)	CO 12t, HI, Note 3, 3/4 MV
Carapace, full	6(-30)	DD maser, HI, IN corrosives, 2/3 MV
Plasteel, full	6(-30)	HI, VA cold, 1/2 MV
Plate Mail, full	6(-30)	AD cold & heat, DD electrical, HI, IN maser, 1/2 MV

Field & Screen Chart

Power/ Type	Tech Duration	Level	Effects
Albedo Screen	H 10 hits	FIV	Half damage from laser attacks
Force Field	H 20 hits	FIV	Reduces all attacks $-1RF_6$
Gauss Screen	H 10 hits	FIV	Half damage from electrical attacks
Invisi Screen	H 10 turns	FIV	Note 7
Prisim Screen	H 10 hits	FIV	Note 8
Simp Screen	H 10 hits	FIV	Half damage from rafflurs
Ultra Screen	H 10 hits	GIV	Note 9

better than the rest of the armor, add one to the character's AC. If the helm's AC is worse, subtract one. If no helmet is worn subtract two from the character's AC.

Force Fields and Screens: Only one force field or screen can be worn or used at any one time. If a creature has a mutation force field, he can wear a manufactured field, but he only can have one operational at any given time. Force fields and screens do not protect against airborne attacks, radiation, sonics, or mental attacks.

Red ACT Results Vs. Defenses

An attack that produces a red result reduces the value of a defense. If the target is using more than one kind of defense the reduction applies first to any fields or screens operational during the attack, then to shields, then to armor or natural defenses. The reduction lasts until the damaged defense is repowered, repaired, or healed.

Armor or Natural Defenses: The reduction always applies to the best protection in use. If armor and natural defenses are equal, reduce armor first.

Force Fields or Screens: The field or screen is reduced by -1RF. If the field reduces damage from the attack it loses one half its effect for each -1RF. In the case of very rare screens that absorb damage, reduce the total damage the field can sustain by one quarter for each -1RF. When a field is shifted to 0, it shuts down and must repower for one minute before it can be switched on again.

Shields: The reduction destroys a small shield, reduces a medium shield to a small shield through breakage, and reduces a large shield to a medium shield.

Abbreviations And Footnotes

AD The wearer suffers +1RF damage from the listed attack form.

CO The armor is combustible and can catch fire when exposed to **I**12 or better flames or heat for the number of turns indicated.

DD The wearer suffers double damage from the listed attack form, but the armor's normal damage reduction still is considered.

HD The armor halves the damage from the listed attack form.

HI A helm already is included in the AC rank. The helm is made from the same material as the armor.

IN The armor renders the wearer invulnerable to the listed attack form unless a red result is rolled, no damage but AC is reduced by 1(-5).

 # MV The armor is bulky and slows down the wearer to this fraction of his or her normal movement rate.

VA The armor is extremely vulnerable to the listed attack form. Any severe attack (base damage 10 or more) or **I**20 environmental condition involving the attack form reduces the armor's AC by 1(-5) permanently. Repairing the armor cannot restore the lost AC; the armor is permanently damaged.

1. For barding, reduce AC by one.

2. Masks body heat so no IR optics or scanners can detect the wearer.

3. Negates the AC reduction special effect of disruptor weapons.

4. For barding, multiply the armor's cost and weight by the creature's size (vs. man size) to get cost and weight for the barding. For example, barding for a mount four times the size of a man would cost and weigh four times as much as the same armor for a man.

5. The listed weights and costs are for small shields. Multiply by two for medium shields and by three for large shields.

6. Some are stronger.

7. Renders wearer invisible if he moves at a rate of 10 or less. Creatures using sight to locate and attack invisible creatures attack on column A.

8. Creates multiple images of the wearer. This reduces all non-area effect attacks directed at the wearer by -2 RF.

9. This unit can hold three discs, although only one can be used at any given time.

Camouflage: works like the Chameleon (P) mutation, MS 16 ((2000))

Dark: works like the Dark Creation (P) mutation, MS 15 ((1200))

Immunity: works like the Immunity (P) mutation, MS 16 ((1300))

Invulnerability: works like the Invulnerable (P) mutation, MS 14 ((5000))

Light: works like a glow cube device, same cost, range, and duration

Reflective: works like the Physical Reflection (P) mutation, MS 14 ((3500))

Silence: works like the Silence Field (P) mutation, MS 12 ((2750))

Solidify: works like the Water Walking mutation, MS 12 ((1500))

Static: works like the Static Field mutation, MS 12 ((1500))

Vibro: works like the Vibro Field (P) mutation, MS 12 ((1750)) ❑

Weight & Cost Chart[4]

Armor & Screens

Type	AC	Wt. (kg.)	Cost (gp)
Albedo Screen	-	1	((400))
Bark	2	5	30
Chain Mail, full	5	22	300
Chain Mail, partial	3	10	150
Carapace, full	6	20	(1,250)
Carapace, partial	3	12	(75)
Deadsuit	3	2	(300)
Force Field Belt	-	1	((1,000))
Gauss Screen	-	1	((350))
Gridsuit	5	10	((2,000))
Heavy Cloth/Fur	1	4	1d6x4
Invisi Screen	-	1	((2,500))
Kevlar	4	6	((900))
Leather	2	5	50
Plant Fiber, full	5	10	(1,150)
Plant Fiber,partial	4	7	1,000
Plasteel, full	6	9	(1,500)
Plasteel, sheath	3	5	700
Plastic, full	4	7	(800)
Plastic, partial	2	2	100
Plate Mail, full	6	25	900
Plate Mail, partial	4	15	450
Ring Mail	4	8	250
Simp Screen	-	1	((600))
Skeinsuit	2	6	(500)
Stabilsuit	5	11	((1,900))
Studded Leather	3	6	75
Synthvelope	3	8	((950))
Wood Sheath	2	7	40

Helmets

Type	Wt. (kg.)	Cost (gp)
Carapace	2	12
Kevlar	1	50
Leather	0.4	5
Metal, heavy	3	20
Metal, thin	1.5	9
Plant Fiber	0.6	8
Plasteel	0.9	15
Plastic, heavy	0.8	10
Plastic, thin	0.5	6
Wood	0.7	7

Shields

Type	Wt. (kg.)	Cost[5] (gp)
Carapace	1.5	9
Leather	0.3	5
Metal, heavy	3	17
Metal, thin	1.2	8
Plant Fiber	0.5	6
Plasteel	0.8	12
Plastic, heavy	0.7	9
Plastic, thin	0.4	5
Wood	0.6	6

On Your Feet

Letters, Letters

by Peter Hague

Much to my great delight, I received mail in response to my first column on tournament scoring, a lot of mail.

Eric Johnson wrote from West Point that he has seen players role-playing outside their characters in an attempt to be dominant. As DM, he responded by pointing out the players' shortcomings and was rewarded with low DM scores from the offenders. His feeling was that for him to do otherwise would not have been fair to the other players in the group.

Certainly I applaud Eric's courage in standing up for his convictions, but I am still left with a fundamental problem. This game is supposed to be fun, and the competition is supposed to add to the enjoyment of the game. When the game stops being enjoyable, we will start losing gamers, which hurts us all.

Kenneth Medve wrote with some very interesting approaches to the same problem. He points out the difficulty in playing a supporting character (which he defines as a cleric or a thief) and making a positive impression in three or four hours of tournament play. He suggests relating character backgrounds before play begins, and I'm not quite sure what I think.

Each player's character sheet indicates how that character should react to others and what he knows about them. With this in mind, it is easy to say that the character sheets should just be written in more detail. After all, the character sheets are supposed to give each player an idea of what role the other players are to fill. In practice, though, sometimes they do and sometimes they don't fill their assigned roles, and writing a module is at best a difficult and time consuming undertaking (if you haven't tried it, get a copy of the module writing guidelines from Network HQ and try your hand).

I would suggest that each DM consider, as part of the player's summation, a quick synopsis of roles (not reactions) when the DM feels there might be some misunderstanding.

Another interesting point which Kenneth raises is in response to my suggestion that at the end of the round each player attempt to convince the others of how well they role-played their characters. Kenneth points out that generally easy-going players play easy-going characters. As such, easy-going players might not use strong arguements when explaining themselves.

I have seen a solution to this problem coming into favor in more and more tournaments. Instead of giving the players any choice in the characters, assign the characters randomly. I did this and was amused at one player's reaction to her "bad luck" in the character draw and then was most impressed with the way she played what she drew.

I strongly support this method of character distribution. Good players generally play well, no matter what character they draw. And there is no question that there is great enjoyment in doing something well when you weren't sure you could do it at all.

Perhaps just discussing this issue will prompt Network members to think about their votes and consider the less dominant characters. The player who role-plays best should win. Perhaps we will see more of this happening.

Role-Playing The Situation (Misdirection)

The DM's job in role-playing NPCs, while difficult, is not complicated, I have observed. However, many DMs, while role-playing characters well, short change an encounter's role-playing aspects. Our game is one of the imagination, and the DM should paint a picture of each situation in as vivid and realistic a way as possible.

For example, I have seldom heard any DM describe a scene this way: "In the trees 50′ in front of you, you see a squealer, hunched and waiting to pounce." What I have heard, though, is something like this: "You look into the trees 50′ in front of you. You see a large creature, about the size of a big gorilla. Its fur is long and yellow with green splotches. It has a pig-like head filled with sharp tusks and an arm extending from its back. It is looking at you, hunched up and ready to pounce.

To an experienced player, both descriptions are about the same.

It is important that the DM keep the situation in mind. Even if the characters have surprised the creature, the second description gives too much information, an unrealistic picture, if you will.

If surprised, the creature is probably facing away from the party, so the face will not be apparent, though the third arm probably will be. If the party is 50 feet away, and the squealer is in a tree or a bush, the size will be difficult to gauge, and its coloration could well appear to be simply shadows playing on single-colored fur. Only upon close inspection will the party find out the full description. And such an inspection, even by an invisible character, probably will negate surprise if the creature has a good sense of smell or hearing.

If the creature has seen the party coming, the description should become even less complete. Remember most of all that this creature is a predator. Even with semi-intelligence, the creature knows it is strong and is feared by its prey. It wouldn't survive if it weren't good at disguising what it really is.

First, the creature will try harder to hide itself, probably increasing its 75% invisibility (even a human with no magical aid can hide in a tree). Assuming the party has discovered the creature despite its efforts, the description probably should be: "You see an abnormal growth in the tree 50 feet in front of you. Looking more closely, you see it is a humanoid creature. It is somewhere between five and eight feet tall and must weigh around 300 pounds. Its color is difficult to make out, but it has fur, not skin. The creature has a long muzzle and two eyes. It is hunched down and looking at you."

So what happened to the third arm, effectively the key point in recognizing the squealer? The arm is behind the squealer's body. He certainly isn't going to wave hello to the party. Only by looking behind the creature or engaging it in combat will the party see the third arm. What happened to the large size and the 400 pounds? Distance is a problem, and the creature is trying to disguise its true strength.

Continued on page 30

The New Rogues Gallery

The Heroes of Shadowguard

by Matthew Taylor

The Heroes of Shadowguard met one gloomy night when a scheming vampire lured Frieda, Argon, Andor, and Indill to his castle under various false pretenses. The "guests," being unaccustomed to working together, soon found themselves in the vampire's dungeons awaiting whatever fate their "host" had in store for them. (The vampire planned to make them into lesser, servator vampires.) However, Lydia's serendipitous appearance spoiled the vampire's plans, and the group was able to gather its collective wits, get organized, and escape, destroying the vampire in the process.

Lydia Nimblefingers

7th Level Female Halfling Thief

STR: 11
INT: 10
WIS: 14
DEX: 18
CON: 15
CHA: 15
COM: 10
AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 6
Hit Points: 38
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Age: 22
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger, Dart, Sling
Special Abilities: Juggling, Jumping, Tumbling, Disguise, Halfling Abilities
Languages: Common, Halfling Languages

Thief Skills:

PP	OL	FT	MS	HS	DN	CW	RL
70	43	44	54	48	30	80	15

Magic Items: *Leather armor +2*

Appearance: Lydia is a plump halfling of mixed blood. She is 3′ 8″ tall and weighs 68 pounds. She has a ruddy complexion and curly red-brown hair. Her brown eyes always have a childlike twinkle. Her clothing usually is a nondescript brown, matching her leather armor.

Background: Lydia was an only child in a traveling family of halflings. When she was one year old, her father left to go on a vampire-hunting quest never to return again. She hopes to find out what happened to her father. Her dogged hatred of all vampires and her desire to learn her father's fate was the catalyst that brought victory to the group during the escape from the castle.

Lydia has an easy-going personality, and prefers to let other people worry about practical things so she can wander around by herself.

When not slaying vampires (not one of Lydia's favorite pastimes, as much as she hates them), Lydia is energetic and curious. She has a knack for sticking her nose in where it doesn't belong. Nevertheless, she has excellent leadership capabilities and can be relied upon when things get rough. On the other hand, when it comes to material possessions, she offhandedly steals things (especially from interesting strangers), and "forgets" about them until she is discovered and threatened. Lydia meets all accusations of theft with indifferance and will surrender a stolen item only if it pleases her to do so.

Freda Strongblade

6th Level Female Human Ranger

STR: 13
INT: 14
WIS: 15
DEX: 17
CON: 16
CHA: 10
COM: 17
AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 47
Alignment: Neutral Good
Age: 28
Weapon Proficiencies: Long Bow, Dagger, Spear, Long Sword
Special Abilities: Survival, Appraisal (gems only), Hunting, Ranger Abilities
Languages: Common, Elvish

Ranger Skills:

HS	MS	Track
37	52	(16)

Magic Items: *Leather armor +3, bracers of archery, boots of the north*

Appearance: Freda is 5′ 5″ tall and weighs 105 pounds. She has a trim, muscular figure and dark skin. Her hair and eyes are dark brown, almost black. She wears her hair long, but usually keeps it tucked up into her leather helmet. Her helmet and leather armor are dyed a very deep forest green. The rest of her clothing is natural brown leather or unbleached linen. She usually wears one or more pieces of simple but valuable jewelry, usually one or more gems in plain settings.

Background: Freda's parents were mercenaries who died when she was five. Freda grew up in the woods with an aunt and lead a sheltered life, not realizing that her parents had died. She thought they were just away on a dangerous journey and would someday return for her. Eventually, when she was 14, she learned the truth. And the truth hurt so much that she ran away in a blind terror and anger, thinking she was all alone in the vast world with no one to turn to. She soon found out that she had made a costly mistake in blundering out in the world without any experience, and she was nearly killed (or worse) by a band of ogres.

Freda later returned to the woods to follow the path of the ranger and apologize to her aunt. She spent many years training and hunting, and then cautiously began an adventuring career, but found that working as a mercenary earned her a more reliable income. Still, she goes adventuring from time-to-time when her sense of ethics tells her something needs doing or when she feels the need to hunt for treasure, as she has a liking for gems of all kinds. Many times her great beauty has gotten her in trouble, but she is very capable of defending herself. Freda is straight forward and at times rebellious if she feels someone is trying to dominate her. She may eventually discard her career as a mercenary because of this.

Argon Firesword

6th Level Male Human Fighter

STR: 18/41
INT: 10
WIS: 14
DEX: 15
CON: 16
CHA: 11
COM: 13
AC Normal: -1
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 52
Alignment: Lawful Good
Age: 27
Weapon Proficiencies: Lance, Dagger, Long Sword, Horseman's Flail
Special Abilities: Animal Handling, Etiquette, Riding (land), Hunting
Languages: Common
Magic Items: Two *potions of healing, long sword +2, shield +2, wand of magic detection* (71 charges)

Appearance: Argon is 6′ 2″ tall and weighs 192 pounds—all of that hard, lean muscle. He is blue-eyed. He wears his light blond hair cut very short. Whenever possible, he wears plate mail polished to a mirror shine.

Background: Argon was the son of Algernon Firesword, a poor man who earned his living as a mercenary. Although the challenge was great, his father became a mighty warrior and attracted the attention of a rich noble, who eventually made him a knight. He was given the name "Firesword" because of the flaming sword he used during his many quests. The sword was lost when the knight met his demise in a battle with a demon. Argon regards the sword as a family heirloom and hopes to recover it someday.

Argon was brought up in poverty at first, but later as the son of a famous knight. He followed his father's footsteps and began training for knighthood at age seven. When his father died, he was compelled to train even harder to honor his father's memory.

Argon is very responsible. When adventuring, he tries to get the best for everyone. He is ferocious in combat, but deep down inside he cringes when he sees even a trace of blood. But he has too much self discipline to let this show. He has a strange interest in magic and sometimes envisions himself a powerful arch-mage. Some of his best friends are wizards. Of course, he does not have the intelligence to become a mage.

Andor

6th Level Male Human Cleric

STR: 13
INT: 15
WIS: 15
DEX: 10
CON: 15
CHA: 18
COM: 12
AC Normal: 2
AC Rear: 3
Hit Points: 48
Alignment: Lawful Good
Age: 38
Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, Mace, Hammer
Special Abilities: Blacksmithing, Healing, Etiquette, Reading/Writing
Languages: Common
Spells/day: 5 4 2
Magic Items: *Chain mail +2, scroll of two spells (neutralize poison, cure disease), incense of meditation*

Appearence: Andor is 5′ 6″ tall and weighs 140 pounds. He has brown hair and hazel eyes. He wears his hair in a tonsure (cut short and with a round spot shaved clean at the crown of the head). His skin is light, but his face is darker. He wears his chain mail over a plain woolen clerical robe.

Background: Andor's parents were smiths in a small rural village. When he came of age he decided he wasn't cut out for smithing, and for a while he hunted for other jobs until he found his place in religion. He learned quickly as a novice and soon became a full-fledged cleric. Although not one of the brightest or wisest of the priests, his high charisma helped him along.

Andor is honest, well spoken, polite, and tactful. He usually is unbending when he encounters unfamiliar habits or customs, but always finds a way to voice his opinion about them without seriously offending anyone. He has an unyielding sense of duty and of right and wrong. In combat he is unwavering, and his spells and healing skills have kept people from death in many adventures.

Indill "The Incredible"

8th Level Male Human Mage

STR: 10
INT: 18
WIS: 14
DEX: 16
CON: 15
CHA: 12
COM: 10
AC Normal: 3
AC Rear: 5
Hit Points: 34
Alignment: Neutral Good
Age: 32
Weapon Proficiencies: Staff, Dagger
Special Abilities: Etiquette, Reading/Writing, Spellcraft, Heraldry, Gaming
Languages: Common, Elvish, Ancient Common
Spells/day: 4 3 3 2
Magic Items: *Bracers of defense AC 5, two potions of healing, five potions of growth, five potions of diminution, scroll of one spell (fireball)*
Companion: Indill sometimes travels with a brownie named Short Stuff. (Indill carries his *potions of growth* and *diminution* for Short Stuff's use.) AC 3; MV 12″; HD ½; hp 10 (magically increased); #AT 1; D 1-3; SA make or repair normal items, once per day *protection from evil, ventriloquism, dancing lights, continual light, confusion, dimension door,* or *mirror image* (three images); SD never surprised, can become *invisible* in natural surroundings. Short Stuff carries and uses a *wand of magic missiles* (48 charges)

Spell Books

Level One Spells

Magic Missile
Find Familiar
Feather Fall
Sleep
Read Magic

Level Two Spells

Web
Detect Evil
Ray of Enfeeblement
Summon Swarm
Scare

Level Three Spells

Lightning Bolt
Dispel Magic
Suggestion
Haste
Clairvoyance

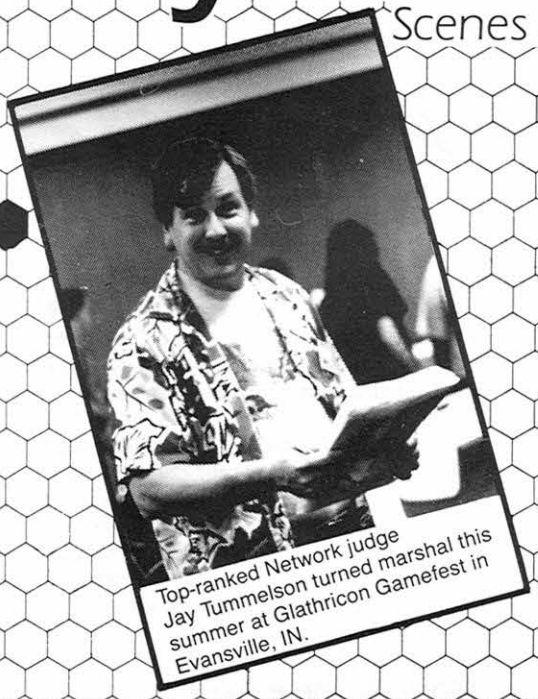
Level Four Spells

Charm Monster
Remove Curse
Wall of Fire
Confusion

Continued on page 30

Eye On The Network

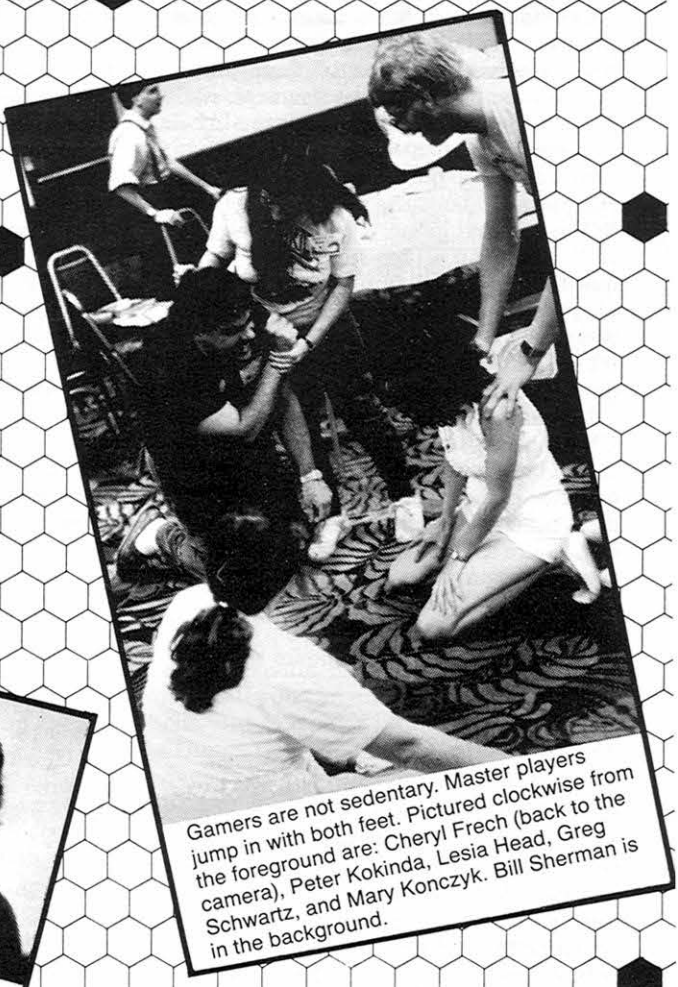
Scenes at Glathricon



Top-ranked Network judge Jay Tummelson turned marshal this summer at Glathricon Gamefest in Evansville, IN.

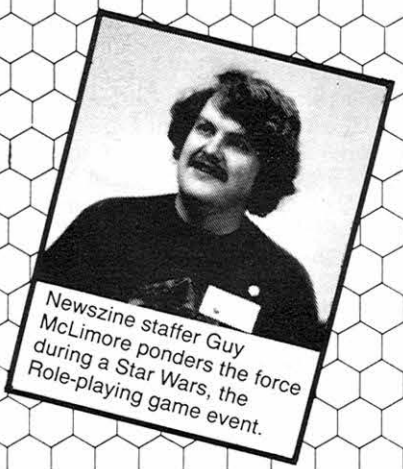
Grand Master players Cheryl Frech and Linda Bingle go shoulder to shoulder in the benefit tournament.

Artist Ray VanTilburg plies his airbrush in the dealers room. His next project is Network T-shirts.



Gamers are not sedentary. Master players jump in with both feet. Pictured clockwise from the foreground are: Cheryl Frech (back to the camera), Peter Kokinda, Lesia Head, Greg Schwartz, and Mary Konczyk. Bill Sherman is in the background.

Convention Coordinator Jeri McGraw speaks at the Sunday luncheon.



Newszine staffer Guy McLimore ponders the force during a Star Wars, the Role-playing game event.

Ghostbusters Revisited

Who Ya Still Gonna Call?

This summer West End Games, publisher of the *Ghostbusters* role playing game, unleashes the *Ghostbusters International* game, based on the new film by Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc. Network tournaments featuring the game are being planned.

West End Games Editor Jonatha Caspian discussed the game with the Newszine staff, and what follows is from an interview with her.

"The first Ghostbusters is a fine game," Caspian said. "It's been quite popular. But there are a couple of features that, combined, prompted us to come up with *Ghostbusters International*. Of course, the fact that Columbia had announced a sequel to the movie Ghostbusters didn't hurt."

Caspian said, "Ghostbusters is a good introductory role playing game. It's a world everybody knows; it's funny, and it's light on mechanics so a new player doesn't have tons of things to remember."

However, Caspian said players complained about the lack of structure in the original game: "What happens if . . . ," was an all-too-frequent question. "Players familiar with role playing wanted to know exact ranges of weapons and amounts of damage. And a lot of that is the Ghost Master's discretion in Ghostbusters.

"Another problem we had with Ghostbusters, one that we also think is related to the 'systemlessness' of the original game, is that the adventures didn't sell well, although the box game did. There didn't seem to be enough there to sustain a campaign, or the adventure subjects weren't what players were looking for. Or maybe it was so simple players made up their own adventures."

Where Is The Difference?

Ghostbusters International retains the same flavor as its predecessor, Caspian says. However, this version is more complex. Many rules have been quantified, giving the game master more guidelines.

"The basic system is still pretty simple," she said. "Almost everything depends on one table, the 'Universal How Much,' or UHM. That's not only the acronym for the system, but it's also the noise your Ghost Master makes when he's looking up the damage, or the distance, or whether you're actually falling." A combat turn still lasts "the amount of time it takes for everyone to do something interesting," which is not nearly so precise as Star Wars (five seconds), or the AD&D® game system (one minute), she said. "But weapons have ranges now, and a machine gun has a 2d6 bonus to hit and 3d6 damage bonus when it does hit. That's a lot more definite than 'It hurts,' and 'It would be bad.' Weapons and equipment also have an encumbrance rating."

Caspian explained that in the original game equipment was assigned by cards, and each player was given the same amount—no matter how big or puny the character was. In *Ghostbusters International* the amount of equipment that a character can carry is limited by the character's strength and the number of his or her hands. "You only have two hands if you're human," she said. "So you can usually use two 'hands' worth of equipment at a time. You can have three or more 'hands' worth of stuff tucked in your backpack or clipped onto your belt, or even strapped on your head."

The Specifics

The UHM tells players and the Ghost Master how much characters and NPCs hit or missed by and the outcome of the actions. It also reveals damage in combat, what information investigations reveal, and how lucky characters are in various situations.

Ghostbusters International, which is compatible with its predecessor, uses regular six-sided dice, with one exception: the Ghost Die. Each time a player rolls dice, he or she must include the Ghost Die, a six-sided die that features a ghost where the number six would appear. Rolling a ghost is bad for the PCs and is good for paranormal opponents.

The Ghostology section has been reworked to make it easier for GMs to create their own spooks and hauntings and determine how tough those things will be to beat, she said. "And one of the best things is the players' ability to set up their own Ghostbusters franchise, complete with lighted sign, unlicensed nuclear accelerators, and their very own ECTO-1 replivehicle, a car just like the one in the movie that comes in a kit from headquarters."

She added the interactions of the PCs' franchise with the parent corporation will allow players great role playing opportunities and a solid campaign framework. Adventures can be assigned by *Ghostbusters International* or can crop up naturally in the Ghostbusters' town.

More To Come

West End is planning support products for *Ghostbusters International*. Caspian said two 40-page adventures are scheduled for release this year, "ApoKERMIS Now!" and "Ghostbusters II: The Adventure." ApoKERMIS is about a forgotten ancient civilization and a curse that will come to fruition unless the Ghostbusters can stop it. The adventure takes place at a local university, where a traveling museum exhibit of Lonibabian archaeological finds could bring about the end of the world. There is a mad scientist, a legion of ghosts, and four Frog-Riders of the ApoKERMIS to battle the PCs.

Ghostbusters II: The Adventure gives participants a chance to replay the movie and save the world their way. The player characters' franchise goes to New York to investigate rumors that the original Ghostbusters is back in business, and the PCs get caught up in the action, standing in for the New York Ghostbusters because the original team has been locked up in Bellevue.

Another release planned is an 80-page sourcebook called "Tobin's Spirit Guide," Caspian said. "This is a facsimile edition of spirits, ghosts, specters, haunts, and demons as described by the foremost amateur paranormologist of the nineteenth century. It features game stats, illustrations, and descriptions for an international collection of entities designed to spice up a Ghost Master's adventures." ❑

Step by Step

Tips for Organizing a Gaming Event

by Fran Hart

So, you're thinking about organizing a gaming tournament or convention? Good. It's a lot of work, but it's not impossible. But where to begin?

Think in terms of events on a time line.

1. Buy a copy of *The Official RPGA™ Network Tournament Handbook* (TSR product #9206) Read it, paying particular attention to page 6. Network HQ also has information on tournament creation. You can get a free copy by sending an SASE to HQ.

2. Gather some helpers. Don't try to do it alone—it's no fun and you will end up feeling irritable, overworked, and abused. Just keep in mind that you and your crew will be working as coordinators and judges while other people will be enjoying themselves playing. Your reward will be the satisfaction of knowing you have run an enjoyable, smooth-playing gaming event.

3. Pick a date and two alternative dates. Consider such factors as: school schedules, other area events for gamers, the weather, and most importantly how much lead time do you need? Obviously, if you are going to sponsor an official Network tournament, you need a minimum of six to seven months lead time.

4. Decide how much you will charge for admission. Consider your costs—printing, postage, rent of facilities and equipment, and any other expenses you may incur. Will a public recreation department, library, school or gaming club subsidize you?

5. Set your gaming hours and decide how they will be structured. How many sessions per day? How long will each session last? How many rounds will your tournament go? Don't forget to build in break time and organization time also. When does on-site registration begin?

6. Decide what types of gaming you will offer. Who will GM these events? Do you need to write the Network for a tournament scenario?

7. Find a place to hold your event. A public building is ideal, preferably one that allows you rent-free use of the facilities. Go armed with exact times and dates you need the building and alternate dates in case your first choice isn't available. Get it in writing.

8. Are you going to require pre-registration? This can be handy if you think you may want to cancel in case of insufficient participation. Develop a registration form that includes: **Name, Address, Phone Numbers, Registration Deadlines** (consider some incentive such as reduced admission for early registration) and any other information you may need. Put the information on a separate sheet that the registrant can keep and use for reference. Include a phone number and an address to handle questions.

9. Select a name. Short, sweet, and easy to repeat is best. For example, use "Gamers Gathering" rather than "The Craterville First Annual Gathering of Role-Playing Gamers."

10. Develop a system to handle registration, this includes name tags, who gets to sign up first for what event, a (heaven forbid) way to handle refunds, and so on. Don't neglect this.

All right, you've got your name, your place, your times, and your events. Judges and helpers are lined up, and you know how much things will cost. Now comes the hard part. You started so far in advance because the success of an event often relies on publicity.

11. Develop a logo and use it on all your forms and publicity. Make sure your publicity includes: the event's name, when and where it's happening, and who to contact for more information.

Suggested ways to publicize an event: Posters, flyers, tent cards, and other printed materials are cheap and efficient. Always allow a minimum of two weeks at the printers. Public Service Announcements on local radio and T.V. stations are nice if you can get them. Send your information to commerical and school newspapers. If your information doesn't show up in print, send it again. Send announcements to local clubs and organizations. Have registration forms available at hobby and specialty shops, bookstores, and libraries. Send announcements and listings to local and national gaming magazines. This is another reason you started so far in advance—it often takes months to get these listings printed. Most magazines, including POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, will not create announcements out of your registration forms. Write a short, but complete announcement of your own.

12. If you plan to offer prizes, get these lined up at least two months in advance.

13. Two weeks in advance, make sure you have all materials on hand—paper, pencils, name tags, prizes, copies of tournaments, etc., and then double check. Re-confirm your facilities and ensure adequate seating arrangments. Make sure you and your crew can get in the site early. If you can arrange a feature article in local papers, do it now.

14. A week in advance, check all your materials once again. Get in touch with your judges and helpers and make sure they know what to do and when to be there. Keep yourself and one other helper in reserve to trouble shoot or fill in for the GM who develops pneumonia or hepatitis or heebie-jeebies.

15. The night before the event, pack all your materials. Check again. Get together with friends, order a pizza, load the VCR with a good movie or play a short, fun game. Try to relax. Get a good night's sleep.

16. The day of the event, get to your site at least two hours early. This gives you time to set up before the inevitable early arrivals. Smile and relax. You've done all you can and it's going to work out. But Murphy's Law is inevitable. (Things **will** go wrong.) Counter it with deep breaths, calm thoughts and supporting friends.

One last thing: if you are going to repeat the event, sit down with your helpers while the experience is fresh in your mind and do a written evaluation of everything that happened. Next time, study the evaluation and learn from it. ❑

Cure Light Wounds

An Insider's View of the AD&D® 2nd Edition Game

by Steve Winter

The POLYHEDRON™ Newszine has given me this space to reply to the review of the new *Player's Handbook* printed last issue, and to answer a few comments that other members have made about the revised game. This is not a rebuttal. I hope to point out those things I disagree with, the areas where I feel the critics have expressed their opinions rather than facts about the game, and explain the reasons why some things were done the way they were.

Before starting, I should introduce myself. I was assigned to the design team in 1986 as the developer/editor. Dave Cook and I worked on the *Player's Handbook* and *Dungeon Master's Guide* steadily for the next year, when the manuscripts were sent out to numerous groups of playtesters. When the playtest results came back, Dave Cook made the needed adjustments and corrections, Mike Breault and Warren Spector re-edited both books, and I wrote the introductions and compiled the indexes.

I'm not going to argue with what Lisa and other members have said about the 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook*. They've stated their opinions honestly, and there's nothing to be gained by starting a fight. Opinions, however, are highly subjective things, especially when they're about something like a role-playing game. Lisa, for example, states in *The Critical Hit*, issue #48, that "paladins have lost the cavalier feel that *Unearthed Arcana* gave them, and this is bad." I disagree; I'm glad to see it gone. Other members agree. They feel that *Unearthed Arcana* paladin and cavalier were too powerful and too complex. Everyone will have his own opinion about that sort of thing. Ultimately, it doesn't matter a whit what I or Lisa or anybody else thinks. These kinds of things are entirely matters of personal preference.

We knew from the beginning that we couldn't make everyone completely happy, and we didn't try. We didn't even make ourselves completely happy; that's the point of working within restrictions. I doubt there is anyone playing the orginal AD&D® game who is entirely happy with everything about it, and I feel the same way about the new game. The whole thing is just too big and open-ended to be perfect in everyone's eyes.

Some Philosophy

Everybody has noticed that the new *Player's Handbook* is larger and contains more information than the old edition, in fact, it's the first thing most people notice about it.

How much information to put into the *Player's Handbook* was one of the most important decisions we made during initial development, and we debated it for days. We decided to put most of the rules in the *Player's Handbook* for the sake of speed. In the past, everything revolved around the DM. All answers came from the DM. And everything stopped while the DM looked up a modifier or an obscure rule.

The size of the *Player's Handbook* reflects a deliberate decision on our part to place more responsibility for the conduct of the game on the players. The DM's job is to keep the game interesting, fun, and moving at a good pace. That's hard enough without also having to be an encyclopedia and a filing clerk simultaneously.

The statement that " . . . players are now meant to be all knowing, perhaps to alleviate the need for a DM. . . . " is misleading. To start playing the game, you need to roll your character's attribute scores, pick a race and a class, get some equipment, and step through the dungeon door—the same as before. You don't ever have to read any of the additional material if you don't want to, but if you do want to, it's there.

It never was our intention to collect information from all the previous books into two comprehensive volumes, that simply would be impossible. Our goal was to include the unchanging core rules that form the heart of the AD&D game. The rules in the *Player's Handbook* are now chiseled in stone. We will never change them except where errata is concerned (or until such time, far in the future, that the company decides a 3rd edition is warranted). Much of the material in *Unearthed Arcana* is ancillary and doesn't belong in a collection of core rules. The same applies to almost everything in the *Dungeoneer's Survival Guide* and the *Wilderness Survival Guide*. We incorporated everything that we felt belonged in the core. Everything else is optional. You may see some of that material again in source books and the *Complete Fighter, Rogue, Wizard,* and *Priest Manuals*, but all of that material is optional.

Many people have been wondering out loud about why so much material from *Unearthed Arcana* was left out, especially the extra classes and races. The reason for having those alternate classes and races was to give players more role-playing options. But at the same time, those classes and races were loaded with special abilities and powers. We heard a lot of arguments about how these advantages merely counterbalanced inherent disadvantages. The real point, however, is that playing an unusual character class should be its own reward. If we must bribe players with bonus powers to play a character with some social disadvantages, we're going about things the wrong way.

In the same vein, if a player wants to play a peculiar race because it comes with special powers, he's doing it for the wrong reason. (As a secondary point regarding drow elves, this is a game of heroic fantasy and there's nothing heroic about playing a character that has evil printed into its genetic structure.)

None of these things have been outlawed. The ins and outs of nonstandard PC races and unusual classes are discussed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. In fact, this discussion extends even beyond what was allowed by *Unearthed Arcana* to include things like elf paladins. But if you want to do something unusual with your character, you have to make your case to the DM.

Point/Counterpoint:

The design department and Network HQ have heard a lot of comments about the new game from people who played—and loved—the old game. Here are my opinions:

The ranger has not lost his combat bonus, as some people have suggested. Instead, he gets to choose what sort of creature he wants the bonus to apply

against. This is more restricted than it used to be, since the bonus now applies to only one species instead of 11. The bonus is also +4 to hit rather than plus the ranger's level to damage. A bonus to hit is more generally useful than a bonus to damage. Making the bonus flat rather than increasing with level helps the ranger at low levels without being overpowering at high levels.

Giving the player his choice of enemy enhances the player's input into the character, which in turn improves role-playing. Now a ranger in an island campaign can choose sahuagin or lizard-men as his enemies and get a lot more use out of his bonus. The result is a more well-rounded class.

I cannot see how druids have lost any power whatsoever, either in comparison to clerics or to their 1st Edition counterparts. Consider the following:

	cleric	druid
spheres, major access:	12	6
spheres, minor access:	1	1
special abilities:	1	7

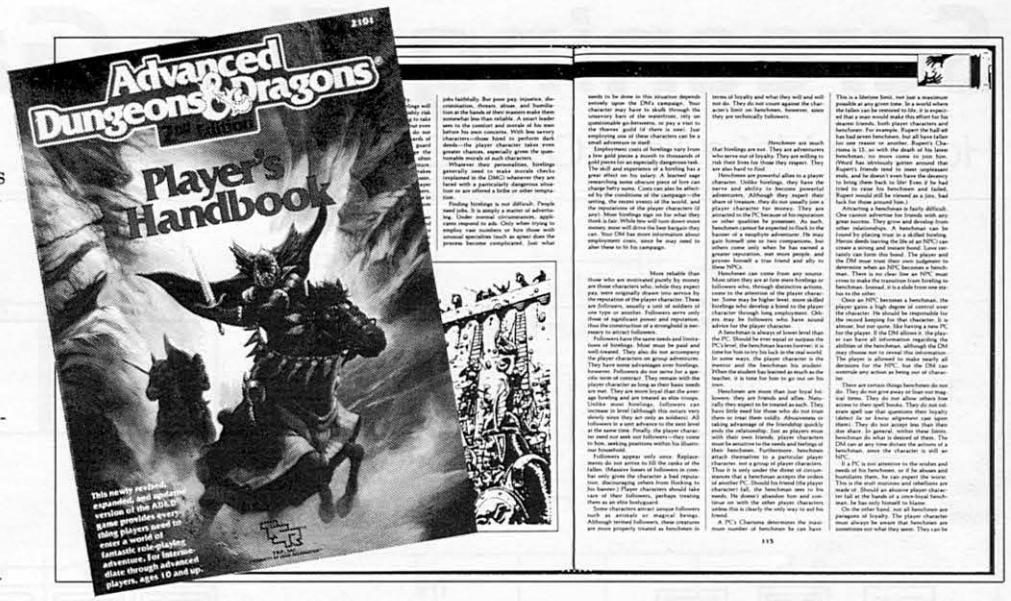
In my book, those seven special abilities are worth giving up access to some spells. The cleric does not get to cast more spells—both the druid and the cleric can cast the same number per day. The druid just has a narrower range to choose from, for which he is compensated with seven special abilities.

The druid's selection of spells is greater than it used to be. The new druid has access to 100 spells. In the old game he had access to 78 (96 with the addition of *Unearthed Arcana*). This is hardly a reduction in power.

Several people have correctly pointed out that *call woodland beings* and *commune with nature* are missing from the druid's spell lists. This is a for-real piece of errata. Those two spells should have crossed spheres and appeared in the Animal sphere (*call woodland beings*) and the Elemental sphere (*commune with nature*), at least so far as the druid is concerned.

The new bard likewise stirred up a lot of controversy when the first draft appeared in the Newszine. Many readers felt the changes made the new bard too weak. The final version is a bit different from that first version. The bard's special abilities are:

limited spell casting
climb walls
detect noise
pick pockets
read languages


Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
Player's Handbook
2101
This newly revised, expanded, and updated version of the AD&D® game provides everything players need to enter a world of fantastic role-playing adventure. For intermediate through advanced players, ages 10 and up.

influence reactions of crowds
inspire companions to heroism
counter effects of auditory attacks
have a chance to know something about anything

The new bard class can be played a lot of ways. He can be a traveling con artist; a wandering, learned minstrel and scholar; or just a happy-go-lucky guy with a song in his heart. We don't force any single role on the player. Again, the class has been altered to offer more options and improve role-playing.

The assassin is gone. Grieve all you want, but the class is no more. The arguments on both sides of this issue are well known, and I'm not going to dredge them up again here. But this is one we simply will not apologize or make excuses for. It was a bad class and we dumped it.

Familiars have been abused for too long, and changes were made purely to force some sort of conscience onto characters. A familiar should be a precious and treasured thing. Wizards need some encouragement to take care of them. In the old game, it wasn't unknown for a wizard who was unhappy with his familiar (especially it if was, say, a toad) to arrange for its accidental demise. The penalty for this was a very vague "displeasure of the gods." That displeasure has now taken concrete form: save vs. death. Obviously, the decision to summon a familiar can no longer be taken lightly. Before summoning, the character had best determine to accept and protect whatever appears.

Comments about the new *identify* spell make it sound as if the changes we made were oversights. In fact, they were specific and intentional.

The spell does not tell the wizard how many charges an item has remaining. It tells him, within a 20-point range, what percentage of its original charges remain. This information is really useful only if the character knows how many charges the item had originally.

A *ring of 3 wishes* appears weak because anything with five charges or less appears weak. Again, this is to keep the players guessing about the true nature of unknown magical items, which we feel heightens the sense of mystery and danger.

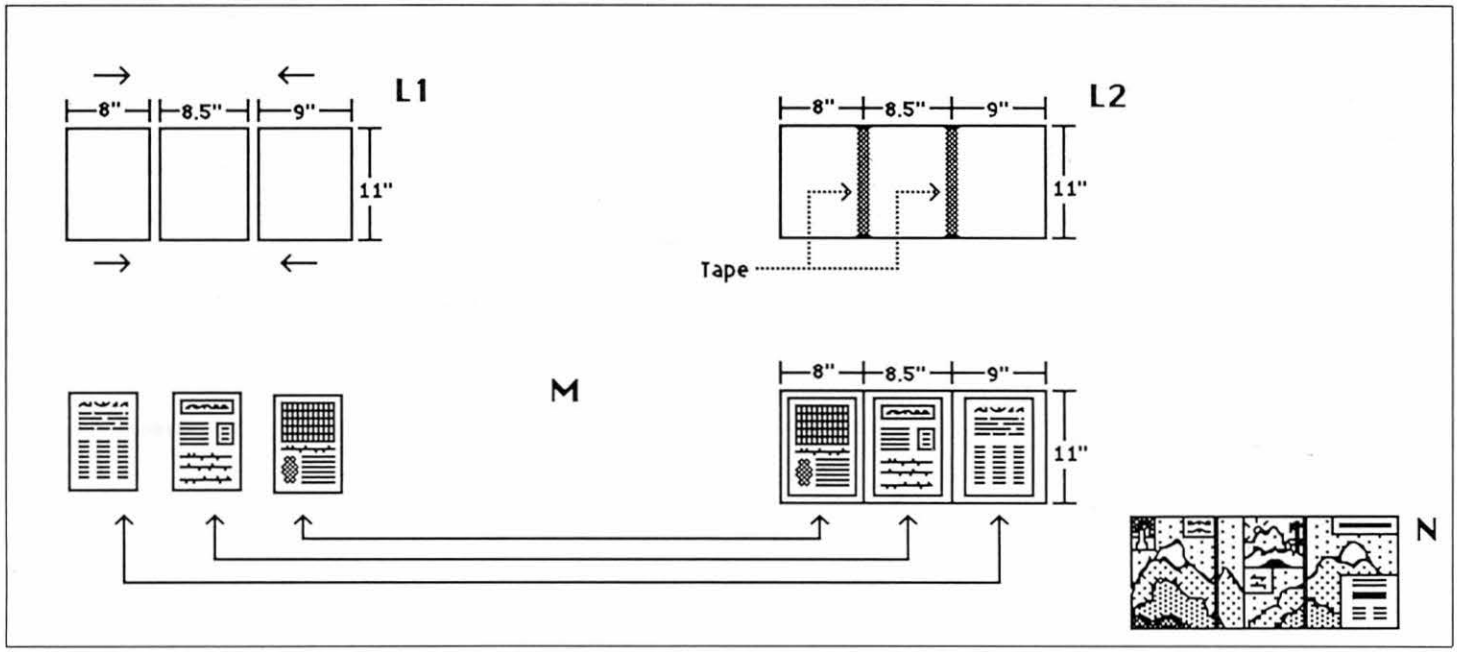
People who lament the "loss" of cantrips should look again. If anything, the reduction of cantrips to a single spell really opens up new options for wizards. A cantrip can now do anything the character wants it to, as long as it's a weak and minor effect. The uses for cantrips are limited, literally, only by what the players can dream up. If that doesn't encourage ingenuity, I don't know what does.

Meat and Poison

These may seem niggling points, but an old saying applies here: one man's meat is another man's poison. If you are in doubt about whether to buy the new *Player's Handbook*, don't let someone else make the decision for you. Read every review you can find (including Lisa's), then go to the store and examine the book yourself. Better yet, find a friend who has a copy and borrow it for an evening or two. We're sure the effort is worth it. ❑

Screening The Game

How To Make Your Own Game Screen



by Brad Probert

Reference screens come packaged inside many role-playing games or can be bought separately. Although many of these screens are attractive and made well, they don't carry all the information some game masters want.

Getting Started

Begin with thick poster board or mat board, a variety of colors are available. You also will need durable tape, about one inch wide. Other supplies include a hobby knife, scissors, and glue.

Mark on the poster or mat board the dimensions of the screen's panels, based on the size of screen you want (see diagram A). You can make the center panel or two shorter than the rest, allowing you to see over the screen during play. Other options are to make the screen a single unit with several panels, or to make two separate screens each with several panels. If you choose the latter option, one screen could contain combat tables, while the other could contain travel tables, encounter charts, and other material (see diagrams B through D for examples of screens).

Make each panel, for example from left to right, a little larger than the preceding panel (see diagram G). This makes it easier to fold your screen.

After you have selected the type of screen you want and have marked the dimensions, cut out the screen. Then, take a hobby knife and cut halfway through the thickness of the poster or mat board where you want the screen to fold (see diagrams E and F).

Fold the panels so you make a crease along the back sides of the cuts (see diagram G). Now lay the screen flat, put the side with the cuts in it face down (see diagrams I and J). Tape the center of the folds from the top of the panels to the bottom (see diagram K). Smooth the tape out as you go along, and trim off any tape that protrudes on either edge of the screen.

A second option is to cut out each individual panel (see diagram H) and tape them together.

To assemble this screen, lay each panel side by side, with the smallest to the largest panel left to right (see diagram L). Tape down the middle of the separations, from the top of each panel to the bottom (see diagram K).

Adding The Information

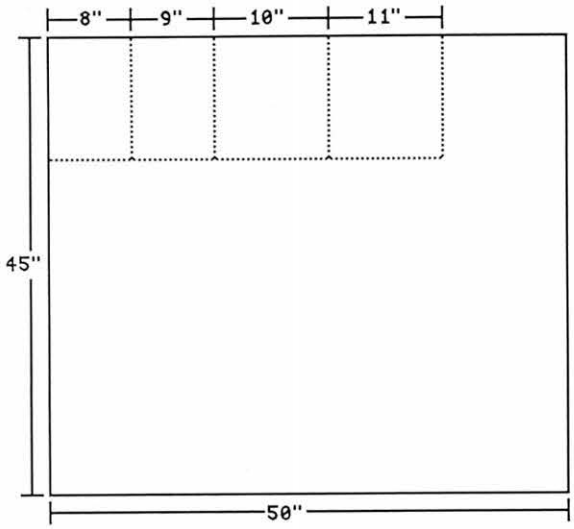
Select the charts and illustrations you want to put on your screen. If you want to use pre-made tables from rule books, check the legal copy in the game to see if it is all right to photocopy the information. Select only information you use frequently; don't waste space on charts you rarely consult.

Arrange your charts on the interior of the screen, using tape or glue. Be sure to center the sheets properly and smooth them down so the edges do not curl.

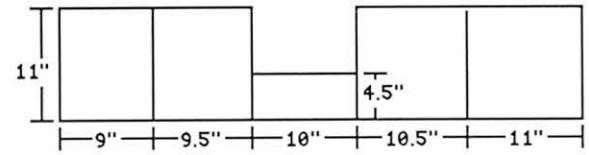
For a finishing touch, add art to the outside of the screen and to blank areas on the inside between charts.

Spend a few moments placing the pictures on the screen until you are happy with the appearance. Arrange the larger pictures first, overlapping the smaller pictures (see diagram N). Affix the pictures with glue, smoothing down the edges to prevent curling. If you place art over the screen's folds, you might have to take a hobby knife and slice the picture at the fold so the screen can still bend.

To add extra durability to your screen, put clear contact paper over the panels. ❑



A



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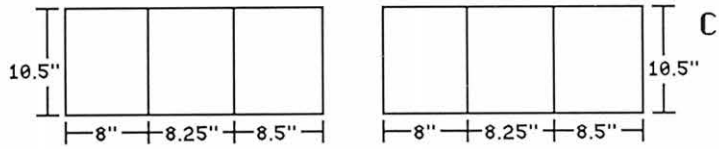

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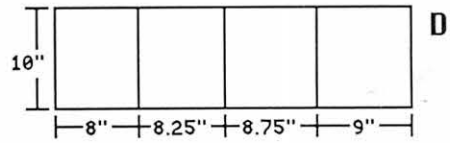

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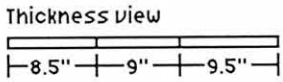

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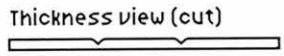
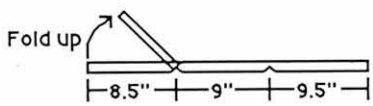
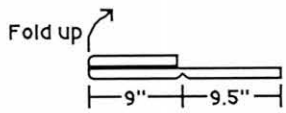


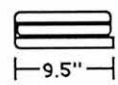
F



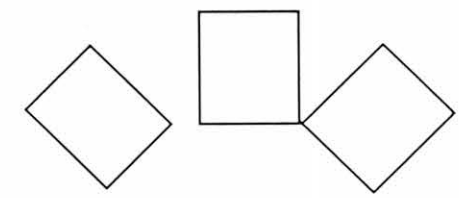
G1



G2



G3



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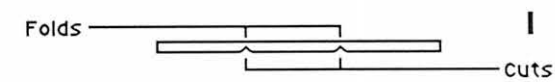

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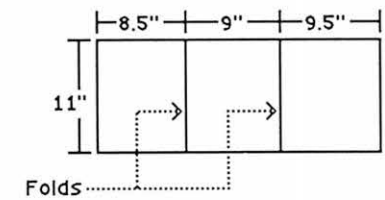
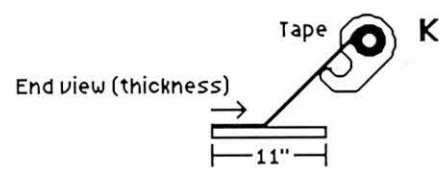


J



K

The Living City

The For-Rest Inn

by Michael Selinker

When Ravens Bluff's developers cleared the land that would become the Living City, they hired the strongest woodsmen to fell the mightiest oak of all. The woodsmen came back smiling, turned in their axes and told their employers that it wasn't nice to chop down big trees. The oak stayed, the city grew around it, and everyone was happy.

Everyone, that is, except Thistledew Vine, the dryad who lived in the tree. Thistledew still had her home, and her life, but missed the lush forest and gleeful woodland creatures that brightened her days. But as she wandered the city (as much as was within exactly 360 yards) she saw the many humans congregating in inns and taverns and having a grand time. After consulting her tree, she remodeled its interior and opened The For-Rest Inn, the Living City's only inn solely for woodland spirits.

This exclusivity means that few in Ravens Bluff know it exists. Other than some of the elves, gnomes, and halflings in town, it is known only to woodland creatures, who come from all the surrounding forests to stay. Any traveling sprite, hybsil, or booka who comes to town will find no more hospitable hotel. Thistledew charges no rent, for she has almost no expenses. The only fee she imposes is secrecy, for if the city tax collectors found out, she would soon be out of her tree, or so she fears. Actually, there is a formal deed, albiet dusty and long forgotten by Thistledew, in the hall of records naming her as the owner of the lot where her tree grows. But whether any city official knows, or cares, about the inn is unclear.

The For-Rest Inn is an oasis of natural beauty in the urban landscape of Ravens Bluff. It appears to be a private garden with a massive oak tree in the center. A low wooden fence rings the garden, where high grasses surround rows of fruits and vegetables. A path runs from the gate throughout the garden, and birds flit about the large oak. A smaller oak tree also grows on the grounds, and a lone halfling caretaker roams the grounds alone.

It is fortunate for evil creatures that they are not generally captivated by nature scenes, for they would be in big trouble otherwise. Evil creatures who linger threateningly by the garden gate are likely to irk the halfling, who calls himself Peter Trum. This wouldn't be so bad if Trum were not a shapechanged baku. The baku has sworn to protect the dryad and her tree, and in so doing occasionally roars, frightening and sometimes killing evil souls nearby. After scanning all comers for alignment, he lets in only good and neutral creatures who know what they're coming for. He tells humans in a halting Common that this is a private garden, and only lets them in if Thistledew says so.

Despite appearances, Trum is not the gardener. That responsibility belongs to the small oak tree; an eight-foot treant named Sequaxion, or Seek, as he is called, maintains the garden, and defends it against attackers. The roaming oak tree and the roaring "halfling" have given the garden quite a reputation with the neighbors, who generally regard the place as haunted.

The 80-foot oak hotel is 35 feet in diameter at the base, and has a two-foot wide by four-foot tall opening in the base. (The rule is, if you have trouble getting in, you probably shouldn't be there.) Inside, part of the tree's base the has been cut away, and a ladder leads up five feet. The entire first level is the main tavern room, which contains a bar and several small tables. At the top of the ladder, Thistledew has posted a "NO JOKING" sign in Common and Elvish. This is a futile warning, as fights usually break out over—and in the form of—practical jokes.

A clientele for an average day might include a halfling druid and her attendants, two gnomish adventurers, a killmoulis tired from a long day's scavenging at the Open Air Market (see POLYHEDRON™ Newszine #44), three pixie revelers, a leprechaun wine connoisseur, and an atomie come to listen to his friend, Ikiiki Ikiiki. Icky, as some call him, is an outgoing grig minstrel who plays both his fiddle-like humstrum and his legs.

Thistledew's least favorite and most permanent guest, the faerie dragon Peppercorn, can be found almost every day lurking in the rafters six feet over the bar. Peppercorn delights in causing as much chaos in the hotel as possible. She usually is invisible, but many's the gnome who catches a fleeting glimpse of a golden-aquamarine butterfly before swallowing his *airy watered* beer. Peter is tired of customers seeing pink baku, and breaking into *Tasha's uncontrollable hideous laughter* at his large nose. Even with his mental powers, Peter has not been able to catch or expel Peppercorn.

The ladder from the tap room leads up to the guest floor, which contains three small private rooms (about 25 square feet each) and a larger common room. The private rooms each have a stone washbasin and a pile of straw and feathers for a bed. Light slips in through cracks in the tree bark.

A ladder leads up from the guest floor to Thistledew's private quarters, and to Peter and Ikiiki's shared room. Thistledew's room contains a bed of leaves, a mirror, a wooden bathtub and her personal effects, including a cedar chest containing 300 gp and 15 gems of assorted vaules.

The shared room is split in half, completely barren on Peter's side and awash in bright tapestries on Ikiiki's side. Ikiiki keeps a bag with 20 gp under his feather pile.

Thistledew Vine

Dryad Innkeeper

Armor Class: 9
Move: 12″
Hit Dice: 2
Hit Points: 14
Attacks: 1
Damage: 1d4
Magic Resistance: 50%
Intelligence: High
Alignment: Neutral
Size: M (5′)
Weapon Proficiencies: Dagger
Special Abilities: *Charm person* 3 times per day (save at -3 for near-permanent effect, *dimension door* to her tree, must stay be within 36″ of the tree
Languages: Common, Elvish, Pixieish, Sprite, Halfling, Speak With Plants

Thistledew Vine has lived in this tree for longer than the Living City has been alive. Since opening her inn, she has changed from being shy and pacifistic to

taciturn and forthright. She knows how to handle her patrons, and if any misbehave she calls Peter to throw them out. She can frequently be seen muttering to herself, but what people don't know, the oak tree understands. Thistledew is humorless for a woodland spirit, and hates practical jokes. She has to deal with several dozen in a night, and by midnight usually is fed up with the tomfoolery. Still, she is an amiable spirit with a soft heart, and is always willing to hear stories brought from other forests. She also frequently plays the part of the sympathetic bartender for the occasional brownie who just can't cope with life as a familiar. She does not use her charming ability often, as it has very long-lasting effects, but she can still be charming and captivating.

With her limited ability to travel beyond her tree, she knows very little about the city beyond what her customers tell her. She sends Peter on all her errands. Thistledew cares for nothing more than the safety of her tree, and is certain that if the city officials discover her inn, they will try to chop it down.

Peter Trum

Baku Bouncer

Armor Class: -2
Move: 21″ (12″ as halfling)
Hit Dice: 12+12
Hit Points:: 67
Attacks: 3
Damage: 3-18/2-12/2-12
Magic Resistance: 20%
Intelligence: Exceptional
Alignment: Neutral Good
Size: L (9′ at shoulder) or S (3′)
Special Abilities: trumpeting roar every four rounds causes evil creatures within 4″ 1-8 hp and save vs. paralyzation or flee in fear for 12 rounds, invisibility at will, astral and ethereal travel, psionics
Languages: Halting Common and Elvish
Psionic Ability: 196
Attack/Defense Modes: B,E/F,G,I
Disciplines: Animal telepathy (12th level), body control (6th level), body equilibrium (6th), cell adjustment (12th level fighter), detection of good and evil (12th level), reduction (12th level), shape alteration
Magic Items: *Ring of the ram*

Peter Trum is a baku who never dreamed that in all his millennia he would serve as a tavern bouncer. Peter, whose real name is Aroooooo, once saved Thistledew's tree from being destroyed by a red dragon, and swore then that he would protect her from all harm. Thistledew graciously declined his offer, but when the forest was leveled, she realized she needed help to survive among the humans. Peter was happy she changed her mind, having always liked her, and agreed to serve as the guardian of her garden. An erudite and gallant baku, Peter's sole purpose in life is to protect Thistledew and her tree from the ravages of evil. He stands ever vigilant in his halfling guise, scanning all comers for evil. Thistledew has told him not to stop every evil person he sees, for that would call attention to the inn. However, he has used his roar on occasion, typically scaring more people than he intended to. He uses his ring to emphasize his points if he doesn't want to roar.

Peter can telepathically communicate with anyone. He only speaks Common haltlingly, as he is unfamiliar with speech as a vehicle for communication.

Sequaxion

Treant Gardener

Armor Class: 0
Move: 12″
Hit Dice: 7
Hit Points:: 41
Attacks: 2
Damage: 2-16/2-16
Intelligence: Very
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Size: L (12′)
Special Abilities: Animate 1-2 trees within 6″ (3″ move, Dmg 4-24/4-24), never surprised, saves at -4 against fire and suffers +1 hp per die of fire damage
Languages: Common, Treant

Sequaxion is a young treant who befriended Thistledew some time ago. As trees are not generally allowed to walk freely in Ravens Bluff, Seek stays in the garden. He does not move very quickly, as Thistledew has told him that humans tend to not like trees that move. A cheery, blissful oak, he makes certain the garden grows well so that all of Thistledew's customers have enough to eat. As there are no other trees nearby, the only tree Seek can animate is the inn itself.

Ikiiki Ikiiki

Grig Nightclub Musician

Armor Class: 2
Move: 6″ (12″ leap)
Hit Dice: 1/2 +1
Hit Points: 4
Attacks: 3 or 2
Damage: 1-3/1-3/1-3 or 1-6/1-6
Magic Resistance: 30%
Intelligence: Average
Alignment: Neutral Good
Size: S (1 1/2″)
Weapon Proficiencies: Dart, dagger
Special Abilities: +2 to hit with missiles; 90% likely to gain surprise; 10% to be surprised; fiddling can cause *Otto's irresistible dance* within 30′; at will powers as 6th level caster *change self, entangle, invisibility, pyrotechnics, trip, ventriloquism,* heightened senses
Languages: Common, Atomie, Brownie, Grig, Pixieish, Sprite

Icky is a very calm grig, which means he is still far too uptight, garrulous, and jumpy for most people to keep up with. He loves talking to customers, and fancies himself quite the ladies' grig. His songs are never more than a few seconds long, unless he decides to sing in Common. He can whip through a 2,000-song set in a night, playing both his grasshopper legs and his humstrum. Icky has been told not to force any of the customers to dance irresistably. He won't use his powers to cause mischief unless there is already a jokefest in the inn.

Peppercorn

Faerie Dragon Loiterer

Armor Class: 5 (1 if invisible)
Move: 6″/24″ (MC: A)
Hit Dice: 4
Hit Points:: 12 (old)
Attacks: 1
Damage: 1-2
Magic Resistance: 72%
Intelligence: Genius
Alignment: Chaotic Good
Size: S (1 1/2′)
Special Abilities: euphoria gas breath (2′ cloud causes save vs. breath weapon or wander blissfully at -10% AC for 3-12 rounds, intelligence check each round or remain euphoric), *invisibility* at will, wizard spells cast at 12th level
Languages: Common, Elvish, Faerie Dragon, Pixieish, Sprite, Speak With Animals

For-Rest Inn

Continued from previous page

Spells/day: 4 4 4 4 4 1

Spells learned:

Level 1 Spells

Firewater *Message*
Unseen Servant *Cantrip*

Level 2 Spells

ESP *Irritation*
Shatter *Tasha's Uncontrollable Hideous Laughter*

Level 3 Spells

Cloudburst *Phantasmal Force*
Item *Suggestion*

Level 4 Spells

Confusion *Fumble*
Otiluke's Resilient Sphere *Polymorph Self*

Level 5 Spells

Airy Water *Telekinesis*
Animal Growth *Wall of Force*

Level 6 Spells

Transmute Water to Dust

Peppercorn came to the Living City because she knew she could cause all kinds of mischief among the humans. She spends her days playing pranks in town, then settles in at the inn for a long night's shenanigans. She prefers not to appear involved in the tricks, remaining invisible while *telekinesing* a patron's mug of ale onto a nearby head. Most of all, she likes provoking the dour Peter, especially by using *phantasmal force* and *ventriloquism* to play "99 Baku of Beer on the Wall." She never tries to hurt anyone, because that would get Thistledew really mad. Peppercorn sleeps in the rafters or branches and dines in the garden, making her easily the inn's most satisfied customer. ❑

On Your Feet

Continued from page 18

A key DM's rule of thumb comes from this: other than the most powerful and generally most unintelligent creature, no offensive creature beyond plant intelligence will intentionally give a precombat display of its power *unless it doesn't want to fight.* A female squealer protecting its young will hide the young and give a great display of her size and breeding, complete with chest beating, arm flailing, and ferocious noises. This even applies to creatures with animal intelligence.

On the other hand, weaker creatures generally make a great display of strength they don't have. Weaker creatures tend to imitate stronger creatures in an effort to be left alone and not become lunch for the next predator which happens to come along.

This approach applies even more strongly to humans. Certain traits simply can't be easily hidden. Wizards will have their robes. How else will they store their spell components in easily reached spots? Fighters will have full sets of armor (and good luck telling the men from the women).

A first level wizard may have very elaborate robes. Certainly he or she will be carrying a staff which appears to be magical.

An eighteenth level wizard, on the other hand, can select his or her appearance more freely, Most often, this individual will want to disguise his or her true strength.

Fighters are a bit different. A military leader will wear a distinctive set of armor, and a leader of poorly disciplined troops will look as ferocious as possible. In this instance, the leader wants to intimidate his or her own troops to keep them under control.

Otherwise it's to the fighter's advantage to have the enemy concentrate on the wizard while letting the fighter get close. Then our less-than-intimidating fighter can unleash his fifteenth-level skills and make quick work of his opponents.

Sun Tzu (a famous Chinese military writer) said that a successful military leader must know his enemy. It is just as important to keep your enemy from knowing you. If your NPCs know this be sure you practice it. ❑

The New Rogues Gallery

Continued from page 20

Appearance: Indill is 5′ 8″ tall and weighs 142 pounds. His hair is brown and usually tousled. His eyes are green. He usually wears a finely made but slightly worn blue robe and a rumpled, broad-rimmed blue hat.

Background: Indill was born into an upper-class family in a large city. Although he grew up watching his friends train to be great warriors, he grew more and more fascinated with magic. His high intelligence helped him in his studies, but he didn't try hard enough, and was faced with the fact that others with stronger wills were passing him by. Finally, he exerted his full effort and devotion to magic, and performed very well. He received his protective bracers as a reward upon graduation from Illyana's Sorcery School.

After completing his novice training, he joined an adventuring party. All of his compaions were killed in a long journey. He survived through clever use of his spells.

After his return Indill bought a cottage deep in a forest and settled down to do research. Soon after he moved in Indill had his first visit from Short Stuff. The brownie showed up at Indill's door, exhausted and bedraggled. His tiny village had been overrun by hobgoblins, who captured most of the inhabitants and almost killed Short Stuff. Short Stuff was determined to rescue his people, so Indill hired a small band of warriors and went to free the brownies. After a fierce battle and a lot of luck, Indill's party emerged victorious. Many died or were injured in the battle. Fortunately, Indill's magic was there to save the day, even though he was among the badly wounded. To show his appreciation, Short Stuff dedicated himself to the mage as a lifetime servant. To show *his* appreciation, Indill gave Short Stuff a rare elixer that permanently increased his hit points.

After the battle Indill decided adventuring was just a wee bit too risky and retired to his studies. He remained a recluse until the summons from the vampire, and has since decided that adventures will find him even if he doesn't go looking for them.

Indill is indifferent to most things, but if given the opportunity, he can rise to the occasion with his spells. ❑

The Bard's Corner

Poems from the Members

The Dragon and the Paladin

by Toni Cobb

The Dragon and the Paladin
Decided they must fight.
Each convinced the other wrong
And sure that he was right.

The Dragon sharpened his mighty claws
The Paladin his sword.
And it is told that both of them
An oath of vengeance swore.

The Dragon stoked his firey breath
And glossed his fire-red hide.
The Paladin oiled his armor of plate
And polished up his pride.

And each with attitude so smug,
Walked on the battlefield.
Each ready now to win or die,
For neither foe would yield.

When the Dragon lashed his mighty tail
The very earth did shake.
But the Paladin regained his feet—
In quite disheveled state.

Yet as he stood he forward lunged.
Sharp sword red scales did slice.
"Dear Paladin," said the Dragon,
"That wasn't very nice."

A deep inhale, a puff of smoke,
And the fire came rushing past.
But when it cleared the Paladin stood
Where should have been just ash.

"Dear Dragon, you're a mighty foe."
"Of that you can be sure."
"But Dragon fire has no effect
"On one like me who's pure."

The Dragon smiled a toothy grin,
As he closed in again.
The Paladin presented sword.
His position to defend.

And so they fought into the night,
Till both in terrible state
Decided they should take a rest
Before they met their fates.

Now the Dragon held out his huge paw.
And said, "Good Knight, let's shake."
"If asked, I'll tell you bested me,
If you'll reciprocate."

The Paladin he swallowed hard,
Then shook the Dragon's claw.
This then is how the story ends.
Except for one small flaw.

For we all know that Dragons lie!
And when asked about the fight,
He'd killed the lowly Paladin
With just a single bite!

Brave Paladin told that it was true,
The Dragon he did scare.
For that was why he ran away
And hid within his lair.

So if a fairy tale you want
Then all you need to do,
Is ask a Dragon or a Paladin
To tell a tale or two.

My Bedroom Window

by Jeff Mills

Looking through the glass pane,
I see a small boy;
A gallant knight
Swinging his sword in a broad arc,
Slicing through the soft necks
Of goblin and troll.
He forces a way.
Step-by-step he goes.
The tall weeds fall at his feet,
His slaughtered foes.

The Necromancer

by Jeff Mills

Robed all in black,
He walks the night.
The Necromancer
Can kill with a word.
Not demon, Not devil
Can match him.
A wave of his craggy hand,
A blink of his rheumy eye,
The Necromancer
Can kill with a word.

When the fires start,
When the skies turn red.
No one will stop him.
Armies will die at his feet.
For the Necromancer
Can kill with a word.

Dragon Fear

by Jeff Mills

Strange are its effects,
The sound of its roar.
When you see it coming,
You freeze.
You can't move.
How can one defy such magnificence?
You marvel at its beauty.
You long to ride it,
To be swept away on its powerful wings.
You dread its awesome power.
You know you'll be its next meal,
But you stand still
And wait for it to come.
You do not run,
You're under its spell.
The magic is undeniable.
It will win.
It always does
No matter the warrior—
weak or strong.
All who see it
Freeze.
Chilled to the bone.
It's useless.
Why run?
You stand still
Taken in by the
Dragon Fear.

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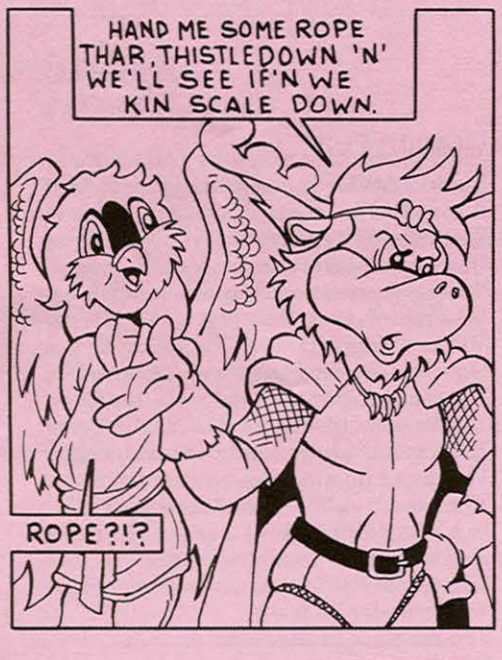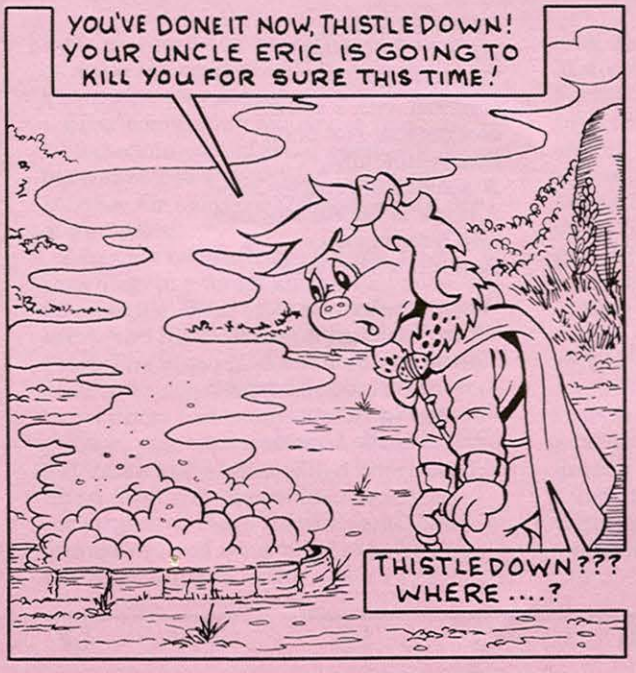
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